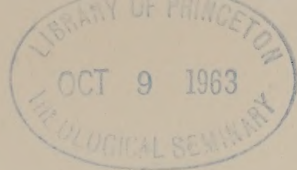




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Lichtenstein, Aharon.
Henry More



Henry More

The Rational Theology of a Cambridge Platonist

BY

AHARON ✓ LICHTENSTEIN

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

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Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from the Ford Foundation

Published in Great Britain by Oxford University Press, London

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 62-17220

Printed in the United States of America

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Preface

The outstanding quality of seventeenth-century religious thought is its turbulent complexity. Partly because of the prevailing popular interest in religious problems, partly because of the close interrelation of religious and political life, perhaps principally because of the transitional character of the age, the period saw the intense development of a bewildering array of interwoven questions of religious faith and practice, on both the general and the scholarly planes. The whole complex of emotions, values, and ideas which religious tradition had nourished and transmitted for so many centuries, the fabric of cosmology, psychology, and ethics which it had inculcated since the rise of medieval Europe—this began to be challenged and gradually superseded by newer concepts developed under the impact of the rising forces of secular rationalism and science. The attempt to formulate a consistent Anglican *via media* coincided with the evolution of a full-blown separatist Puritanism, and the two were to clash on the most purely abstract and the most bitterly practical of fields. Discussions of ecclesiastical organization, of church-state relations, of government both within and without the church polity, were intertwined with debates on the quality of reason and faith, or the source and nature of religious authority. And all this at a time when, in virtually all areas of national life, religious issues were at once the most prominent and the most pervasive, in the midst of a religious situation which, as Helen White once pointed out, held the center of the stage of practical affairs for almost the last time in the modern world. An “age of excitement,” Macaulay rightly called it, and its ferment, intellectual as well as political, was primarily stirred by religious issues.

The keynote of the period—an Ariadne’s thread which guides us through the labyrinthine mazes of seventeenth-century religious thought—is clearly the problem of reason. The role of

reason, its nature, its realm, and its validity—this is the central axis around which the major religious issues of the period clearly revolve. In one form or another, virtually all the principal developments in the intellectual, religious, and theological life of the age are somehow bound up with this protean problem. It is the crucial factor in relation to the two questions with which English religious thought of the earlier seventeenth century was primarily concerned: the nature of religion—of God, man, and their relation; and the source and repository of religious authority, past and present. Finally, the various conceptions of reason provide a sensitive barometer which measures the significant and decisive changes which took place in English religious thought during the course of the century.

This book is a study of the seventeenth-century problem of reason in relation to Cambridge Platonism generally and to Henry More particularly. The Platonists—besides More (1614–1687), the leading figures are Benjamin Whichcote (1609–1683), Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688), John Smith (1618–1652), and, to a lesser extent, Nathanael Culverwel (d. 1651?)—the Platonists are of course closely identified with a positive emphasis upon reason. Their favorite text was “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord (*Proverbs* 20:27),” and they saw that spirit as imaginative and purified human reason, harmonizing, illuminating, and galvanizing man’s total religious personality, directing it to the service and experience of God. In the Cambridge men, the influences of humanism and Anglican liberalism coalesced with the transcendental and inspirational elements of Platonism to produce a theology which emphasized morality and devotion rather than dogma and worship; and which saw inspired reason—moral and spiritual no less than intellectual—as both the ultimate religious authority and the ground of religious experience.

Together with this positive emphasis upon reason, however, the Platonists express a very different attitude. They are constantly inveighing against over-intellectualization. Time and again, they insist that intellectual activity is relatively unimportant, that our primary emphasis must be upon action and feeling rather than thought and study, that moral conduct and simple piety are sufficient means to salvation. Far from seeing constant rational

endeavor as an integral and indispensable aspect of the personal spiritual odyssey, they regard it as an expendable adjunct. In a word, in the religious life as the Platonists conceive it, reason may play a quiescent role.

The Platonists' attitude toward reason is thus not single but dual. In this study I have attempted to analyze the nature of this dual attitude and to trace some of its ramifications as they developed within the Platonists' own thought and through their influence upon their successors. I think this influence was substantially greater than is generally realized. The Cambridge men bestrode a crossroads of English religious life, and they helped determine the path it subsequently followed. The significant change which was gradually transforming mid-century Anglicanism was, in part, reflected by the Platonists, and, in part, effected by them. Personal contact and published writings enabled them to place their stamp upon many of the religious leaders of the next generation. The temptation to exaggerate the importance of his subject is a Circe which no doubt beckons to every author; for writers on relatively little-known figures the urge is nothing short of an occupational hazard. And most enticing, of course, are the shifty quicksands of presumed "transitional" significance. Yet, with all due caution, the conclusion seems to me inescapable: Cambridge Platonism was a considerable force shaping the direction of subsequent English religious thought.

Broadly speaking, this book is concerned with Cambridge Platonism generally, and the thesis that it develops could be pursued—albeit on a reduced scale—with regard to a number of its adherents. However, practical considerations have forced me to concentrate upon a single figure, Henry More—the most voluminous, the most varied, and the most interesting of the Platonists. This study will proceed, then, along the following lines. After an introductory chapter, it will begin with the presentation of what I prefer to consider More's basic attitude—a view which fully recognizes the role of reason in religious life and which sees spiritual fulfillment as based upon the harmonious integration of man's total personality and its dedication to the service and experience of God. It will then go on to discuss the literal disintegration of More's central position, to analyze the nature and

basis of his desire for a simple religion in which intellection would be of relatively minor importance. Finally, it will attempt to point out some of the consequences of this latter aspect, as they are manifested in More himself, and as they indicate the direction his successors were to follow.

Clearly, this study will by no means constitute a complete presentation of More's multifaceted thought. Much that is relevant to a thorough understanding of him must be glimpsed briefly or omitted. More's theosophic interests will be almost entirely neglected, although we should keep in mind that they *were* a part of him. His efforts to assert the existence of spirit and his view of its relation to matter are of course much more important, but these, too, as well as More's scientific views will likewise be barely touched. We shall thus be left with what I consider most important—More's religious outlook. I might add that it also seemed most important to him—"such knowledge as is of most concernment, I mean the right knowledge of Relligion."

For the modern reader, the study of More's prolix writings can hardly constitute an uninterrupted pleasure. In charm and grace his pages are generally deficient. Of true humor they show very few traces; and the occasional attempts to inject a humorous streak often turn out grotesque. Much that More wrote is undeniably dull, and time and again, the reader finds himself plodding wearily. With the exception of occasional lofty flights, More's writings are unduly crabbed—their points often belabored, their terminology onerous (quaint even in its own day), their diction harsh, and their rhetoric uneven. Nor does More's erudition always stand him in good stead. He does not carry his learning lightly. More often seems overburdened by his own ponderous knowledge, and that knowledge is itself rather uneven. He is eclectic, but hardly catholic. The freshness, the freedom, the sense of scope and sweep which exhilarate in a writer of true breadth—in a Goethe, Brémond, or Whitehead—are, in More, virtually absent. Far from out-topping knowledge, he is often trampled under it. Even the sympathetic reader is forced to recognize that much that More wrote is dead—stillborn from its inception or subsequently fossilized.

And yet, there is life in these dry bones, and a vital message in

these dead leaves. More's writings stand forth as an affirmation of spiritual reality and spiritual ideals. Against contemporaries—his or ours—who would reduce existence to material phenomena and all human motives to materialistic desires, he asserts the claims of the eternal verities—of a higher presence and nobler principles. In the age-old struggle between those who would look below and those who would look above, those who are content to make man his own measure and those who demand a devotion to what is above and beyond the human plane, More insists, with the latter, upon maintaining a timeless vision of spiritual idealism, of striving for what has never been and will always be. More's vision is of course seen in religious terms; its essence is not merely devotion to an ideal but surrender to God. Above all, More insists upon the depth and sincerity of religious worship, upon the harmonious integration of all human faculties in the dedicated service of God. No doubt, most of More's message has been better delivered elsewhere—more succinctly, more eloquently, and more convincingly. But it is a message which must be repeated in every age, always the same and always different. And if we wish to understand it in its seventeenth-century context—not unrelated to our own—we must take account of Henry More.

To the writer, the study of More has proved both challenging and rewarding. One hopes that something of the same may be said for the reader. Needless to say, More is neither the most profound nor the most influential of seventeenth-century religious thinkers. However, he concerned himself with fundamental questions and he did not hesitate to come to grips with issues basic to religious thought—of his own or of any other day. In a sense, More is of course a minor writer, but he dealt with major problems, cast a good deal of light upon them, and stimulates his readers to do likewise. Within his limitations, he is both interesting and important. The imprint left by More upon the shores of seventeenth-century intellectual history the waves of time have since partially effaced. It is hoped that this study, written (to adapt Spenser's phrase) "with a second hand," may be of value in effecting its restoration. The tribute of recognition is one which Henry More richly deserves, and it has been long overdue.

In conclusion, I would like to thank those who have helped

make this book possible. The greatest debt by far is mentioned in the dedication; but its expression is beyond language and its requital beyond imagination. As for the others, a list of my general intellectual creditors—appreciated and acknowledged with every fiber of my being—would be too lengthy and yet too brief. I shall therefore simply confine myself to thanking those who were directly connected with this book: Professor Perry Miller of Harvard, who read the manuscript in its original form, encouraged its publication, and offered valuable suggestions for revision; Professor Marjorie Nicolson of Columbia, who read the manuscript at a later phase and suggested further improvements; Mrs. Adelle Robinson, who did all the typing with meticulous grace and painstaking efficiency; and finally, *magister meus*, Professor Douglas Bush of Harvard, who not only read the original manuscript and guided its writing, but who has served as a standard of humanity and scholarship, a perpetual source of wisdom and inspiration.

New York City
November 1961

Aharon Lichtenstein

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Henry More
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a Cambridge Platonist

The following abbreviations have been used in the footnotes except when it has been necessary to specify a particular edition:

<i>Ant. Ath.</i>	<i>An Antidote against Atheism</i>
<i>Ant. Id.</i>	<i>An Antidote against Idolatry</i>
<i>App. Ant. Ath.</i>	<i>An Appendix to the foregoing Antidote against Atheism</i>
<i>App. Ant. Id.</i>	<i>An Appendix to the late Antidote against Idolatry</i>
<i>Conj. Cab.</i>	<i>Conjectura Cabbalistica</i>
"Defence"	"A Defence of the Moral Cabbala" in <i>The Defence of the Threefold Cabbala</i>
<i>Div. Dia.</i>	<i>Divine Dialogues</i>
<i>Ench. Eth.</i>	<i>Enchiridion Ethicum</i>
<i>Enth. Tri.</i>	<i>Enthusiasmus Triumphatus</i>
<i>Imm. Soul</i>	<i>The Immortality of the Soul</i>
<i>Myst. G.</i>	<i>An Explanation of the grand Mystery of Godliness</i>
<i>Myst. I.</i>	<i>A modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity</i>
<i>Con. L.</i>	<i>Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642-1684</i> , ed. M. H. Nicolson (New Haven, 1930)
<i>Norris-More Corr.</i>	"Letters Philosophical and Moral, to Dr. Henry More, with the Dr's Answers," in Norris, John, <i>The Theory and Regulation of Love</i> , 2nd ed. (London, 1694)
<i>HLQ</i>	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
<i>JHI</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>

All Greek words in text, quotations, and footnotes have been transliterated.

Introduction:

The Man and His Problem

HENRY MORE was born in October 1614, the youngest child of an established and well-to-do family in Grantham, Lincolnshire. His early schooling was obtained at the local Grantham School, which had trained Sir William Cecil, and was soon to send forth its greatest product, Isaac Newton. As a child, More showed some proficiency in Latin and Greek. This youthful promise apparently attracted the attention of a learned paternal uncle and, principally at the latter's behest, the adolescent More was, at the age of fourteen, sent on to Eton.

The move was one that the uncle, a rigorous predestinational Calvinist, was soon to regret. In sending More to Eton "not to learn any new Precepts or Institutes of Religion; but for the perfecting of the Greek and Latin tongue,"¹ his elders apparently felt that he could be left on his own as his religious mold had been formed and finished. The pensive youngster proved to be still pliant, however, as new ideas quickly struck a responsive chord. Contemporary English religious thought was becoming increasingly permeated by a growing emphasis upon reason. In different ways and to varying degrees, Puritans and Anglicans alike were moving generally from the rigid Calvinism of the Elizabethans toward a concept of God, man, and their relation in less wilful and more reasonable terms. The young More's nature quickly attuned him to the new *zeitgeist*. He soon became revolted by the doctrine of a *decretum horribile* which doomed

¹ From Ward's translation of sections of the autobiographical "Praefatio Generalissima" with which More prefaced the Latin edition of his *Opera Omnia* (1679) in *The Life of the Learned and Pious Dr. Henry More* (London, 1710). The autobiographical passages quoted in the following pages are cited from the same source, pp. 5-16.

so many to a reprobation predetermined, eternal, and irrevocable. His revulsion reached a decisive climax in an incident that occurred shortly after his arrival at Eton. In one of the most charming of his autobiographical passages, More later recounted how he had been unable to "swallow down that hard Doctrine concerning Fate" so that he could not but

dispute against this Fate or Calvinistick Predestination, as it is usually call'd: And that my Uncle, when he came to know it, chid me severely; adding menaces withall of Correction, and a Rod for my immature Forwardness in Philosophizing concerning such Matters: Moreover, that I had such a deep Aversion in my Temper to this Opinion, and so firm and unshaken a Perswasion of the Divine Justice and Goodness; that on a certain Day, in a Ground belonging to Aeton College, where the Boys us'd to play, and exercise themselves, musing concerning these things with my self, and recalling to my mind this Doctrine of Calvin, I did thus seriously and deliberately conclude within my self, viz. "If I am one of those that are predestinated unto Hell, where all things are full of nothing but Cursing and Blasphemy, yet will I behave my self there patiently and submissively towards God; and if there be any one Thing more than another, that is acceptable to him, that will I set my self to do with a sincere Heart, and to the utmost of my Power." Being certainly persuaded, that if I thus demeaned my self, he would hardly keep me long in that Place. Which Meditation of mine, is as firmly fix'd in my Memory, and the very place where I stood, as if the Thing had been transacted but a Day or two ago.

Already evident in the earnest youth, "walking, as my Manner was, slowly, and with my Head on one Side, and kicking now and then the Stones with my Feet," are the keen moral sensitivity and the desire for assimilation to the divine will which were to distinguish More's mature religious thought. However, ten years and a major inner crisis were to pass before the direction of his subsequent spiritual development was fully defined and determined. After three years at Eton, More was admitted to Cambridge in 1631, entering Christ's College just as Milton was leaving. His early years at the university were peaceful enough. Upon his arrival he had the good fortune of being assigned to a tutor (probably William Chappell, who quarreled with Milton and possibly flogged him) who was, as More put it, "both learned and pious, and, what I was not a little solicitous about, not at all a Calvinist; but a Tutour most skilful and vigilant." He derived guidance from the moderation of benign Joseph Mede (possibly

the "old Damoetas" of "Lycidas"), whose influence he readily absorbed; and, finding the atmosphere congenial, More made good progress in his work. He was burning with a thirst for knowledge, and for knowledge for its own sake. His eagerness was such, More writes, that "when my prudent and pious Tutor observ'd my Mind to be so inflam'd and carried with so eager and vehement a Career; He ask'd me on a certain Time, 'why I was so above Measure intent upon my Studies.'" More's reply was succinct and to the point: "I answered briefly, and that from my very Heart; 'That I may know.' 'But, young Man, What is the Reason,' saith he again, 'that you so earnestly desire to know Things?' To which I instantly return'd: 'I desire, I say, so earnestly to know, That I may know.'"

More's eagerness enabled him to earn a degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1635/6. During the same year, however, it also initiated a spiritual crisis which was to last some three or four years and which was to strain every fiber of More's being. Having immersed himself "over Head and Ears in the Study of Philosophy," More became troubled by the question which every scholar, if he work not "without a conscience or an aim," must sooner or later ask himself: whither does the pursuit tend and where does it all end? He began to question "whether the Knowledge of things was really that Supreme Felicity of man or something Greater or more Divine was: Or supposing it to be so, whether it was to be acquir'd by such an Eagerness and Intentness in the reading of authors, and Contemplating of Things; or by the Purgation of the mind from all sorts of vices whatsoever." More found that four years of reading Aristotle, Cardan, Julius Scaliger, "and other Philosophers of the greatest Note," had left him unsatisfied. They failed to deal adequately with the eternal issues which he now encountered face to face—the problems of the nature and destiny of the human soul and of its relation to God. As the question thus took a religious turn, More was even troubled by a mild sort of skepticism, in which, although the foundations of his fundamental faith never wavered, he nevertheless found their philosophic formulation difficult.²

² He put the substance of his doubts into the form of a brief Greek poem, "Aporia" or "The Perplexity of the Soul," written in 1635 shortly before he received his B.A. degree. More's own translation may be found in a letter

This mood was not to prevail for long, however. In a university which, unlike the still Aristotelian Oxford, was becoming strongly—and increasingly—influenced by Plato, More turned to Platonism; and with Platonism, his recovery began. He was soon reading the Platonists “and the Mystical Divines, among whom there was frequent mention of the Purification of the Soul, and of the Purgative Course that is previous to the Illuminative; as if the Person that expected to have his Mind illuminated of God, was to endeavour after the Highest Purity.” The direction of this purgative course was then charted for him by the late medieval *Theologia Germanica*, that “golden little book” (probably written by Tauler or a disciple), which Luther had done so much to popularize. The purgation, it suggested, consisted essentially of one step—the negation of “I-hood” and the accommodation of the human will to the divine; “that we should thoroughly put off, and extinguish our own proper Will; that being thus Dead to our selves, we may live alone unto God, and do all things whatsoever by his Instinct, or plenary Permission.” This is more easily said than done, however, and More soon found himself in the midst of a period of inner conflict—“Good God! what Struglings and Conflicts follow’d presently between this Divine Principle and the Animal Nature!” This period of “Holy Discipline and Conflict” was to continue for “the Space of between 3 and 4 years,” but the “Divine Principle” gradually gained the ascendancy—“and that insatiable Desire and Thirst of mine after the Knowledge of things was wholly extinguish’d in me, as being solicitous now about nothing so much as a more full Union with the Divine and Coelestial Principle, the inward flowing Well-spring of Life eternal: with the most fervent Prayers breathing often unto God that He would be pleas’d thoroughly to set me free from the dark Chains and sordid captivity of my own will.” Finally, the struggle ended triumphantly, and More discovered that, with the renunciation of extreme intellectualism, even the quest for knowledge itself now brought greater success:

More sent to Anne Conway ca. January 1670 (*Con. L.*, p. 299). A slightly different translation—also declared to be More’s own (probably a later revision of the version hastily sent to Anne)—was published by Ward, *Life*, p. 12.

When this inordinate Desire after the Knowledge of things was thus allay'd in me, and I aspir'd after nothing but this sole Purity and Simplicity of Mind, there shone in upon me daily a greater Assurance than ever I could have expected, even of those things which before I had the greatest desire to know: Insomuch that within a few years, I was got into a most Joyous and Lucid State of Mind; and such plainly as is ineffable.

His regeneration More celebrated in a brief Greek poem, "Euphoria" or "The Extrication of the Soul," written shortly after he received his M.A. degree in 1639 and subsequently translated by himself:

I come from Heav'n; am an immortal Ray
Of God; O Joy! and back to God shall goe.
And here sweet Love on's Wings me up doth stay.
I live, I'm sure; and joy this Life to know.
Night and vain Dreams be gone! Father of Lights,
We live as thou, clad with Eternal Day.
Faith, Wisdom, Love, fix'd Joy, free winged Might,
This is true Life: All else Death and Decay.

The poem represents More's renewed affirmation of "Faith, Wisdom, Love, fix'd Joy, free winged Might," his "Everlasting Yea" in reply to the negation and despair of three or four years earlier. In a larger sense, it marks the culmination of his inner conflicts.

With the resolution of this crisis, More entered upon calmer waters. No longer torn by inner conflicts, he proceeded to chart the steady course which he was henceforth to follow. Early in 1639, just as his struggle was being successfully concluded, he received the degree of Master of Arts, and he entered holy orders. Later in the year, More was appointed Fellow and Tutor and—in the face of paternal opposition—he settled down to a lifetime of studying, writing, and teaching. Cambridge became his permanent residence and More was to spend his remaining forty-eight years firmly anchored on the banks of the Cam, absenting himself from the university very briefly and very infrequently. His father's pleas that he pursue a pragmatic career in the world fell on deaf ears. Even a clerical career was rejected. Having been ordained deacon in 1639 and priest in 1641, More did allow himself, in 1642, to be instituted and inducted as rector of a "living" which his father owned in Ingoldsby (later made famous by

Richard Barham's *Legends* and located in his native Lincolnshire). His tenure was brief, however, and, in any event, it hardly interfered with More's sojourn in Cambridge, inasmuch as he was a non-resident at Ingoldsby. Subsequently, More refused numerous opportunities for preferment to clerical offices promising lucrative reward, widespread renown, or both. More's was rather the path of spiritual growth and intellectual development, and for these Cambridge offered the most conducive environment. In due time, his father was reconciled to his plans, and More received general recognition when he was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1660. More then continued his activities at Cambridge until his death in 1687, at the age of seventy-three.

More's adult life thus appears to have been placid and uneventful indeed. By the major upheaval of the century—one of the most tempestuous in English history—More seems to have been virtually unaffected. Having possibly accepted the Covenant and almost certainly taken the later Engagement,³ he was one of the few fellows whose sojourn at Cambridge remained uninterrupted throughout the period of the Civil War, the Protectorate, the Commonwealth, and the Restoration. Nor were there sharp reversals of personal fortune to disrupt the even tenor of his existence. Enjoying a measure of financial independence,

³ There is some ambiguity regarding More's political views during the Puritan era. Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, Eng., 1873-1911), III, 382-383, quotes and accepts Sancroft's statement—made in 1644/5 on the basis of hearsay—that More accepted the Covenant. More himself—in the preface to his *Tetractys Anti-Astrologica* (London, 1681)—denied this, however, declaring that he was “exposed (by constantly denying the Covenant) to the loss of that little preferment I had before those times” (p. iii). More's denial is accepted by John Peile, *Biographical Register of Christ's College, 1505-1905* (Cambridge, Eng., 1910), I, 414, who assumes, however—on the basis of an unchallenged statement made by Samuel Dillingham in 1652—that More did take the Engagement. In any event, we should beware of exaggerating More's political sympathies in any direction. J. H. Shorthouse, in *John Inglesant* (New York, 1882), refers to him as a “known royalist” (p. 184), and J. H. Overton (*DNB*, s.v. “Henry More”) even describes him as “intensely loyal to the king,” but both statements seem much too strong. More would probably have welcomed any rule which could have stabilized national life and preserved its religious organization; which, if we are to believe Richard Baxter and Godfrey Davies, is exactly what most Englishmen would have done.

endowed with a position of prestige and security, burdened with no family cares, More had, superficially, little cause for anxiety. One may even go somewhat further and see the calm pervading More's life as not merely affecting its surface but permeating its very essence, as reflecting not only the course of external events but the quality of inner character. Nevertheless, we should not misconstrue either the extent or the nature of More's settled security. Even More's later life was not without its struggles nor was it entirely devoid of disruptive elements. More was almost perpetually embroiled in controversy; and, while most of his quarrels appear—in retrospect, at least—to have been of the academic sort, a number were quite serious and rather personal. Foremost among these was the altercation over Cambridge religious liberalism into which both More and Ralph Cudworth were drawn in the years immediately following the Restoration. The preface to the *editio princeps* of More's *Mystery of Godliness*—as well as a number of passages in the work proper—had advocated a certain degree of toleration, and, in tone at least, had appeared to minimize the importance of episcopacy and of formal religious worship. These quickly came to the attention of a number of critics—led, within More's own college, by Ralph Widdrington—who saw their latitudinarianism as potentially subversive to corporate religious life. More faced up to the opposition with confidence, courage, and ability, but the experience was hardly pleasant. He felt constrained to write a lengthy defensive—and partially retractive—volume, *The Apology of Dr. Henry More*,⁴ and even then his foes were by no means silenced.

The nature of More's retirement should be likewise appreciated. More's life, though generally peaceful, was not therefore the less productive; it was placid, but in no sense torpid. Its calm reflects assurance rather than lassitude, and derives from purposeful activity rather than from indifferent vacuity. While the tortured pangs of youthful conflict were over by 1640, intensive lifelong study provided More with another source of ferment—

⁴ The *Apology* was written in reply to a volume of *Objections* against his *Mystery of Godliness*, written in 1662 by Joseph Beaumont (1616–1699), the author of *Psyche*. The course of the controversy may be traced in *Con. L.*, pp. 212–243. See also, M. H. Nicolson, "Christ's College and the Latitude-Men," *MP* 27 (1929), 42–47.

the excitement of discovery and the joy of accomplishment. He was not only a student, scholar, and teacher but also a thinker, and what is more, a thinker very much in the vanguard of contemporary thought. More was one of the first English writers to accept and popularize the concept of an infinite universe, expounding it at length in an early poem, *Democritus Platonissans* (1646). His religious liberalism clearly anticipates numerous later tendencies. Probably most noteworthy in this connection—both as an important chapter in English thought and as an interesting phase of More's intellectual biography—is his reaction to Descartes and Cartesianism. More was one of the earliest English students of Descartes, and, in the early days, his admiration for the Frenchman's philosophy was almost boundless. Coming hard upon his engrossment with the "Platonizing Divines," More's discovery of Descartes seemed to provide him with a system, which, allowing for the existence of both a mechanistic universe and spiritual phenomena, could combine the theistic and spiritual emphasis of Christian Platonism with the mechanistic element of the new science, thus integrating religion, science, and philosophy in one grand synthesis. More wrote hyperbolic letters to Descartes, and he undertook to preach the Cartesian gospel at Cambridge. As late as 1662, in the "Preface General" to his *Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*, More could still write that the true ancient philosophy, which he is presumably seeking to revive, "did consist of what we now call Platonism and Cartesianism, the latter being as it were the Body, the other the Soul of that Philosophy."⁵ In due time, however, he came to see what, with our advantage of hindsight, now appears to us obvious—that the "union" of spirit and mechanism in Descartes is merely that of oil and water; that God consequently assumes, at most, a supervisory and superficial role; and that such a perfunctory deity can, as Laplace was to say, be readily dispensed with. In a letter written to More in late 1667, Worthington mentions that although More had eulogized Descartes in his writings, he has recently intimated privately that he is aware "of the uncertainty of his Philosophy throughout," and that he realizes that many students of Cartesianism

⁵ Sec. 16.

have "derived from thence notions of ill consequence to religion."⁶ And in 1671, in the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, we get a full-blown denunciation of Cartesianism as a system tending to a whole assortment of evils, atheism itself not excluded. The fruit so excitedly discovered and plucked in the forties had turned to ashes, and a disenchanted More set himself to the bitter task of spitting out the remnants. For subsequent editions he wrote palliative or retractive scholia in which the earlier praises of Cartesianism were explained away. It was a sad ending to a vision which had burst with such dramatic hope.

More's extensive participation in the English debate over Cartesianism was thoroughly typical. Despite his retirement, More's interest in the contemporary philosophical scene was not merely passive. He was an active member of the seventeenth-century intellectual community. Through personal contact and through correspondence, More kept abreast of developments in the overlapping realms of science, philosophy, and theology. Foreign correspondents ranged from Descartes—whose letters show real respect for a "Doctissimo et Humanissimo Viro"⁷—to Philippus van Limborch, a famous Remonstrant pastor and Professor of Theology at the Seminary in Amsterdam. At home, More was equally regarded in the Royal Society—both Boyle and Glanvill were close friends, even collaborators—and in theological circles, where he was respected as an able defender of the liberal Anglican position; Baxter⁸ refers to him as the "leader" of the "Latitudinarians," and Baxter was both an objective and a perceptive observer. More also maintained numerous contacts among Quaker leaders. Although repelled by Fox, he conducted amicable discussions with Barclay, Penn, and Keith (for whose conversions both to and from Quakerism he may have been unwittingly responsible). Together with extensive reading, More's varied contacts expanded his horizons, kept him abreast of current philosophic developments, and stimulated his own thought by subjecting him to a variety of influences.

⁶ John Worthington, *Diary and Correspondence*, III, 254; November 29, 1667.

⁷ René Descartes, *Correspondance avec Arnauld et Morus* (Paris, 1953), p. 110.

⁸ Richard Baxter, *Autobiography*, Everyman ed. (London, 1931), p. 177.

On the other side of the coin, More's personal contacts with colleagues enabled him to make his own influence felt. Principally, however, it was exerted through the usual channels: teaching and writing. At Cambridge, hundreds of students came to know him and upon many he left a lasting imprint. Equally important were More's published works, which, despite his repeated assertions of an almost intense aversion for writing, were rather extensive. "I am not onely free from, but incapable of the common disease of this Scripturient Age,"⁹ More assured his readers in 1660, and he went on to declare that he would positively abstain from further publication. Yet, while More did not quite (as a pundit said of Carlyle) "preach the gospel of silence in forty volumes," he wrote considerably. During his most productive period, 1652-1671, he published no fewer than ten major works and a number of minor tracts—an output which by the nineteenth-century standards of a Michelet, Ruskin, or Sismondi, appears meager enough, but which in the light of our own far more modest conceptions, remains quite substantial. In any event, tedious or not, publication enabled More to exert a significant influence upon segments of contemporary thought. Boyle's statement is revealing: he is publishing a treatise defending his views on hydrostatics in order that "they should not be made to pass for absurd . . . by being so severely handled by a person of Dr. More's fame and learning."¹⁰ Nor was More's fame confined to the scholarly milieu. At least one of his works was sufficiently

⁹ *An Explanation of the grand Mystery of Godliness* (London, 1660), "Preface," sec. 1. The preface to this *editio princeps* was not reprinted in subsequent editions. In a contracted form, much of it was incorporated into the general preface which appears in More's *Theological Works* (London, 1708). Some of the sections later omitted were clearly dated, but the omission of others is of some intrinsic significance. More later elided virtually all the statements whose orthodoxy had subsequently been challenged and which he had defended in his *Apology*. The *Apology* was not included in the *Theological Works*, and More apparently felt it would be more prudent to omit from the preface the statements to which offense had been taken—either because he wished to avoid further controversy or because his own views became more conservative in later life. On More's presumed dislike for writing, see also the statements collected in Ward, *Life*, pp. 147-152.

¹⁰ Robert Boyle, *An Hydrostatical Discourse Occasioned by the Objections of the Learned Dr. Henry More*, in *Works*, III, 597. More had criticized Boyle's theories in his *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671).

popular so that the indefatigable Samuel Hartlib could both present it to the King and trumpet its fame overseas. On a less aristocratic note, More's early biographer, Richard Ward, quotes a London bookseller as telling him that, from 1660 to 1680, "the *Mystery of Godliness*, and Dr. More's Other Works, ruled all the Booksellers in London."¹¹ The statement is perhaps an exaggeration—Ward's hagiographic tendencies must be taken into account—but there is little doubt that, during his lifetime, More was a figure of prominence.

II

Significant as a thinker, More was also interesting as a person. While superficially monochromatic, the texture of More's experience contains, within its limits, a richness and a variety which may elude the cursory observer. More is often imagined either as a prodigious scholar confined in some dusty study, poring ponderously over some antiquated folio, or perhaps, conversely, as a romantic visionary entranced in rapturous gaze, lost in a haze of mystical contemplation; with his feet either in the mud or in the clouds but rarely on the firm ground where most men run their race in the light of common day. Such a view is by no means baseless, but it constitutes a distortion. To begin with, the elements which are here included are grossly exaggerated. More was a scholar, no doubt; he spent most of his life at a university, read widely in a number of areas, and certainly was a learned—perhaps even an erudite—person by any standard. But in almost no area did he attain truly comprehensive knowledge, and he certainly was no polymath. French and German he knew only barely. "His knowledge of the schoolmen," finds a student of scholasticism, "was not comprehensive or accurate."¹² And while More has been hailed as an eminent student of rabbinics and the Cabbala—a recent book declares that he "was regarded as one of the greatest rabbinical students of his time"¹³

¹¹ *Life*, p. 163.

¹² J. K. Ryan, *The Reputation of St. Thomas Aquinas among English Protestant Thinkers of the Seventeenth Century* (Washington, 1948), p. 99.

¹³ Max Jammer, *Concepts of Space: The History of Theories of Space in Physics* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 39.

—the range and depth of his knowledge in these fields was quite limited. As Hebraists, Selden, Pearson, Smith, Simon, and probably Milton (to name only a few), are all clearly—perhaps incomparably—superior to More.¹⁴ He did know Hebrew, and he occasionally quotes some of the medieval rabbis, such as Maimonides or Ibn Ezra; but even in the circumscribed area of Jewish philosophy his knowledge was neither thorough nor adequate, and to the more technical sphere of rabbinic law it hardly extended. As for the Cabbala, More's knowledge was fragmentary and mostly second or thirdhand; from a letter to Anne Conway,¹⁵ it is unmistakably clear that he did not even see the *Zohar*, the central text of the Cabbala, until 1671. As for the second aspect of the familiar picture, More's mysticism, its ascription to him is largely based upon a misconception of More, of mysticism, or of both. More had his visions and his private revelations, to be sure, but the fact remains that, as F. D. Maurice put it, he "had only slight pretensions to the character of an original mystic."¹⁶ The term "mysticism," precisely because it does denote a relatively nebulous phenomenon, needs to be handled with care, even precision; and to employ it with reference to More is to bandy it about with altogether too much abandon. The ecstasy and the intensity which mark the various stages of the mystical experience, the piercing and consuming insight which is peculiar to its illumination, above all, the process of total abnegation in which the personality undergoes self-annihilation only to find itself through union with God—these, much as he desired them, are, in their fullest measure, quite beyond More. An aspirant for mysticism More perhaps was, but a mystic, hardly. At no point was he divorced from mundane reality in his contemplative and experiential quest for spiritual reality.

The second reason for rejecting the familiar portrait of More is that it distorts not only by exaggerating certain aspects, but by

¹⁴ He himself was quite candid. Regarding his proposed cooperation in the *Zohar's* translation, he writes: "I freely professe my Ignorance, I mean in the oriental Tongues and Rabbinicall Learning. But what I can assist in dry reason I am their servant" (March 21, 1671/72, *Con. L.*, p. 355).

¹⁵ February 5, 1671/72, *Con. L.*, p. 351.

¹⁶ *Modern Philosophy* (London, 1862), p. 350.

omitting others. For there are others. More's lifelong seclusion in Cambridge should not mislead us into thinking of him as a cloistered recluse. He was cloistered, but certainly no recluse. His retirement was no escape; it was the retirement of the gentleman-scholar, seeking leisure for the pursuit of his studies. More was fully aware of the course of common life, public and private. Although withdrawn from the maelstrom of contemporary political events, More followed them closely, especially observing their effects upon national religious life. More's private life is likewise suffused with a deeply human quality. No less than his fellow, he is fully concerned with the prosaic problems of daily living, the thousand and one petty cares to which flesh and blood are heir.

Something of the personal and intimate aspect of More radiates even through the hagiographic aura of Ward's pages, but it is manifested most clearly and most fully in the numerous letters More wrote to the woman he admired so fervently, Anne Conway. It was in this woman—one of the most remarkable in an age replete with outstanding women—that More confided, with her he found companionship, strength, and comfort, to her he turned "as naturally as the needle turns to the North."¹⁷ And it was in his correspondence with Anne Conway that More poured out his innermost self, including much that may perhaps surprise us. A good deal of what we encounter in the letters we might have expected on any view of More. There are discussions of contemporary intellectual topics, of More's academic life, or of his "scripturient" activity—of the progress of various projects of composition or translation; More's tribulations with printer and licenser; his perennial difficulty in finding capable amanuenses to transcribe his writings; or an all-too-familiar account of the tediousness of proofreading. Scattered here and there is the usual scuttlebutt of academic life—news of preferments and appointments, petty jealousies and rivalries, the attacks by Widdrington, Beaumont, Stubbes (of *Ne Plus Ultra* fame), and "mad Madge of Newcastle" upon Cambridge religious liberalism, or an account of the university exercises at which

¹⁷ March 1660, *Con. L.*, p. 162.

who should stand by me whyle the Vice Chancellour made his speech but Sir John Birkenhed who told me the Vice Chancellour had made an excellent speech, and truly the Vice Chancellour made a good speech. But a day or two after near Charing Crosse when I was going to visit Mr. Boyle, he mett me again, and held me at least half an hour drauling, and amongst other things he abused the Vice Chancellours speech, but I told him that I had commended the Vice Chancellours speech to many upon his account, it having the approbation of so peevish a Critick as he. And do use his name to the same good purpose whether he will or noe.¹⁸

However, together with these expected academic matters, we encounter much which, if we consider More as a cloistered recluse, we may find surprising. We get glimpses of More's rather limited social life—"of the Dukes entertainment at York House" which turned out to be "a most noble supper consisting of fish, foule, and tarte and custard, and gelly'd and banqueting stuff, and which was the most joyfull thing to me, it was contriv'd so that we had time to depart betwixt eight and nine of the clock";¹⁹ or of the dinner given for some friends in More's chambers, personally supervised by him but at which though the "dish of Colledge Commons" was well received, More fears that he was "not so modish as is usual in my quantity of wine after dinner";²⁰ or, finally, of the stuffy dinner which, on account of a sore foot, More had the good fortune to miss.²¹ Or we may observe the good doctor in his more purely personal moments—sitting a bit impatiently (or at least, so he imagines) for his portrait; relishing the prospect of a good cup of Norden's ale (taken, half-jokingly, on one occasion, to compensate the loss of moisture in weeping!); resuming to play the lute after a twenty years' intermission; applauding himself over some generous tipping; chuckling in amusement over the confused conjectures regarding the authorship of his pseudonymously published *Divine Dialogues*; or, in almost every other letter, indulging in inordinate worry over the state of his health, half-imagining illnesses and then suggesting various quack cures for them.

Most impressive is the view of More glimpsed at the level at which the social and the personal converge—the plane of friend-

¹⁸ June 13, 1671, *Con. L.*, pp. 335–336.

²⁰ May 11, 1672, *Con. L.*, p. 357.

²¹ October 19, 1674, *Con. L.*, p. 394.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

ship. More was not a particularly gregarious person, and the number of his friends was by no means large. However, the friendships he did form—mostly with kindred minds such as Anne Conway, George Rust, Joseph Glanvill, John Worthington, Francis Van Helmont, or John Norris—were warm and secure. More was still impregnated with the older tradition, Biblical and classical—so evident in Elyot, Spenser, and Sidney—which considered friendship as a virtue rather than a convenience. He “must againe avouche, that the writing of bookes (when a man is not forced to it either by his place and profession, or obligation of conscience, so that he can not be quiet in minde without so doing) is but a vain glorious peece of Pedantry in comparison of the noble sense of friendship”;²² and More sought to attain this “noble sense” in his own life. Letter after letter testifies to his intimate interest in his friends, to the depth and sincerity of his solicitude for their welfare. Although not an overly sentimental person, More could burst into tears of joy upon meeting Van Helmont—“the more I endeavor’d to suppress it the more it broke out, as old happinesse sometimes touches laughter in Melancholy men”²³—and he wept for a week following Worthington’s death. Certainly, More himself consciously assigned the greatest significance to his friendships. “For I profess if I know my self aright,” he wrote to Anne Conway, “I am nothing but an Aggregate of my friends so that they that are the best and choicest of them are the greatest part of myself.”²⁴ Furthermore, he insists upon realizing the positive aspect of friendship, upon fulfilling it as something richer and fuller than mere polite convivality based upon mutual forbearance. More is painfully aware of the ordinary course of “human conversation, the lawes whereof are so mad and preposterous, that a man may with more applause and acceptance destroy a friend body and soule then omitt an ordinary punctilio of mere modish civility, or give the least check to him in his carier though he be running to the brinkes of death.”²⁵ His friendship, in theory and in practice, is no such negative “civility.” It is, by contrast, charged with positive con-

²² June 5, 1660, *Con. L.*, p. 163.

²³ March 14, 1670/71, *Con. L.*, p. 329.

²⁴ September 3, 1660, *Con. L.*, p. 165.

²⁵ April 14, 1661, *Con. L.*, p. 185.

tent, not merely an arrangement but an ideal; not rooted in a desire for self-preservation but in a sense of collective fraternity, and issuing in a genuine concern for the spiritual and physical welfare of others. And over all there hovers More's gentility, his fundamental humanity. In the tenderness of his inquiries about Anne's child; in his solicitude over Worthington's health; in his exertions to obtain a fitting position for Fowler; in his anxiety over the adjustment of some newly arrived student; in the deference and sensitivity with which he replies to Boyle's pained reaction to his earlier criticisms—in all there radiates the fine nobility of More's nature, directing action, inspiring thought, informing feeling.

To be sure, when all is said and done, we are, in certain respects, disappointed. More's personality, like his writings, is tinged with a certain dulness. Catholicity, power, grace—these he generally lacks. Nevertheless, More remains both an impressive and an attractive figure. For he is thoroughly dominated by that quality which he probably prized above all others—the quality of sincerity. Where he disappoints us, it is not so much by going wrong as by falling short. Certainly, More does not rank with the very greatest spiritual personalities. He lacks the depth, the breadth, and, above all, the intensity, which mark the supremely great. As far as he goes, however, he moves on the right path, and if his was not the broadest of avenues, it nevertheless was wide enough to allow for a latitude and a variety of human interests. I would not, with Tulloch, describe More's as "one of the most exquisite and charming portraits which the whole history of religion and philosophy presents."²⁶ The description seems to me to abandon all perspective, but an interesting figure he certainly was; in many respects, even an inspiring one.

So much for the personal aspect of More. It is with More as a thinker that we are primarily concerned, and before considering his thought in detail, we must define, in general outline, the area and nature of our specific problem. In dealing with More, we cannot treat the whole range of his thought intensively. Probably the most interesting of the Platonists, More is certainly the most

²⁶ John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1872), II, 303.

multifarious. In the profusion of his writings, one encounters variety indeed—science and theosophy, poetry and philosophy, apocalyptics and theology—all grist for his mill. A prior definition of the area of our principal concern thus becomes not only useful but indispensable.

III

Within the latitude of More's interests, we must confine ourselves, essentially, to studying the ramifications of one fundamental dichotomy. For in More we do not have mere variety; there is, *prima facie*—and in many respects, *ultima facie*, as well—an element of contradiction. The incongruity of his scientific and theosophic pursuits springs to mind immediately. But it is not this that is here intended. As Moody Prior²⁷ showed conclusively in his treatment of Joseph Glanvill, to the seventeenth-century mind, spiritualism could be conceived as one branch of science. Glanville did, in fact, propose that the Royal Society sponsor a study of the subject, and More was very careful to point out the almost scientific precision with which he checked the accuracy of his reports.²⁸ Nor should we be excessively disturbed by More's apocalyptic writings. Critics have indeed pointed an accusing finger at them, but with little justice. As anyone who has studied such prophetic expositions is fully aware, there is in reality nothing to render them incompatible with an insistence upon the use of reason in religion. If only one accepts their basis, they may be developed along logical lines by the most clear-headed of theologians.

Quite apart from these supposed vagaries, however, there is in More a certain fundamental dualism, rooted deep in his own nature and cutting across all his thought. Almost invariably, critics have noted the fusion of two divergent tendencies. Coleridge speaks of his possessing "both the philosophic and poetic genius," Benson of his "union of mystical tendencies with such perfect sanity," and Masson of his "semi-mystical philosophy."

²⁷ "Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth Century Science," *MP* 30 (1932), 167-193.

²⁸ See, for example, More's "A Supplementary Collection of Remarkable Stories of Apparitions and Witchcraft," in Joseph Glanvill, *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, 4th ed. (London, 1726), pp. 434, 445.

Hunt writes that More "was rational certainly, but he was also mystical"; Stoughton that "as his philosophy is poetical so his poetry is philosophical"; Tulloch that "strongly rational on one side of his nature against the extremes of enthusiasm, and the prejudices of religious party spirit, he was yet lapsing continually on the other side and into mystical extravagances."²⁹

The ramifications of More's dualism are many, but we may reduce them to one basic dichotomy. In terms which the seventeenth century would have employed, it is the dichotomy of intellect and will.³⁰ Both the intellectual and the volitional aspects of man's nature exercised a strong hold upon More, and his religious outlook expressed both. On one side, More is the rational theologian. The rational character of God and man, the validity of objective truth as opposed to a purely subjective experiential "inner light," the harmony of faith and reason, are all well-worn themes with him. Yet, on the other hand, we find him repeatedly emphasizing with equal insistence, that religion consists of a few simple truths easily comprehended; that its essence lies not in intellection but in affection, not in knowledge, but in right desire and right action; that personal experience rather than intellectual activity is the vital aspect of religion, and that it is only through such experience that one can ultimately arrive at both truth and virtue. In short, the demands both of the will and of the intellect exerted a claim upon him—and a strong claim.

Indeed, we may recall that More himself pointed to the relations of these two elements as the key to his whole religious life. For it was precisely with them that More was primarily con-

²⁹ See, respectively, *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Roberta F. Brinkley (Durham, N.C., 1955), p. 317; A. C. Benson, *Essays* (New York, 1896), p. 65; David Masson, *Life of John Milton* (London, 1875), I, 184; John Hunt, *Religious Thought in England: From the Reformation to the End of the Last Century* (London, 1870-1873), I, 416; John Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History of England: The Church of the Restoration* (London, 1870), II, 483; and Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, II, 376-377.

³⁰ Modern psychology tends to think rather in terms of a trichotomy of intellect, will, and emotion or affection. In seventeenth-century thought, however, both affection and volition are generally related to the will, and in speaking of the will, we shall have reference to both the affective and volitional aspects of human nature. The tripartite division is generally ascribed to Moses Mendelssohn, although some would push it back to Spinoza, and it has even been seen as already implicit in Descartes.

cerned in the course of his youthful spiritual odyssey, that critical period during which he sought to determine "whether the Knowledge of things was really that Supreme Felicity of man or something Greater or more Divine was: Or supposing it to be so, whether it was to be acquir'd by such an Eagerness and Intentness in the reading of authors, and Contemplating of Things; or by the Purgation of the mind from all sorts of Vices whatsoever," and at the conclusion of which he found that "this inordinate Desire after the Knowledge of things was thus allay'd in me, and I aspir'd after nothing but this sole Purity and Simplicity of Mind."³¹ Clearly, any attempt at understanding More or his works must revolve around his view of the relations of the will and the intellect. At bottom, as More himself often asserts, their rival claims may be reconciled, may even be conjoined. Their conjunction is indeed one of the characteristics of the main Platonic tradition. The union of the will and the intellect, then, is the key to More's own central position. At his best, he sees intellection and volition as being not only supplementary but complementary. This view represents one aspect of his theology, but, unfortunately, More did not always regard these two elements in their fundamental harmony. He often considered them to be independent, and, as with the planets in medieval astrology, once disjunct, they tended to conflict. In this conflict, it was the intellect that was gradually forced to give way. The resolution of More's early crisis had banished any extreme intellectualism, and had left him deeply imbued with a sense of the supreme role of the will in man's spiritual life. Consequently, if the intellect were henceforth ever to be contrasted with the will, it would stand no chance. Contrast them, especially as he grew older, More did, and the result was what can only be described as a strong current of anti-intellectualism running through his works. This is the second aspect of his theology—that which relates More to the course of subsequent religious thought.

IV

Although focused on a single figure, the study of More's religious thought may deepen our insight into both the character

³¹ "Praefatio Generalissima" in Ward, *Life*, p. 12.

and historical significance of Cambridge Platonism as a whole. Seventeenth-century Cambridge Platonism does indeed constitute a singularly striking phenomenon. Concerned with science, philosophy, and theology, combining a passion for reason with fervent faith, it is intrinsically important as a notable phase of English thought. As such, it represents a significant response to the basic problems with which seventeenth-century religious thought was primarily concerned: the nature of religion—of God, man, and their relation—and the source and repository of personal faith and external authority. However, it is further important, *positione*, by reason of its historical context. The Cambridge Platonists stand at a turning point—perhaps *the* turning point—of English religious life. Behind them are ranged the Jacobean and Caroline divines, fusing intellectual strength with devotional warmth, depth and breadth in thought with fervent piety and emotional power. Before them, by contrast, there stretches a century and a half in which religion is generally noted for neither profundity in thought nor vitality in feeling, an era in which the vitiation of religion's intellectual element coincided with a marked decline in the quality of religious sentiment. Post-Restoration Anglicanism generally deprecated intellectual religion strenuously, on the one hand, while it simultaneously stifled the voice of experiential devotion on the other. In their stead—and to many, this is of course pure gain—came an increasingly exclusive concern with practical morality. The desire for simplicity joined with a passion for social order in fostering an attempt to reduce religious truth to a few broad principles for which general consent could be assured. Intellectual theology, with all its latent divisive possibilities, was subordinated in favor of ethical conduct, against which certainly no one could cavil. As Lecky points out with reference to the period following the Glorious Revolution, one of "the essential and predominating characteristics of the prevailing theology [was] the prominence that was given to external morality as distinguished both from dogma and from all the forms of emotion."³² The emphasis upon morality went hand in hand with an increasing social concern,

³² W. E. H. Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1878), II, 567.

accompanied by a growing distrust of the personal and experiential aspects of the religious life. A morality untouched by emotion was the ideal toward which English religious life—with very notable exceptions, of course—began to gravitate.³³

Seen in this historical framework, the Cambridge Platonists appear remarkable indeed. In this group of philosophers and theologians were merged all three elements—intellectual power, devotional passion, and moral emphasis. Their philosophic bent, their insistence upon the exercise of reason in the religious life, is everywhere in evidence. Equally prominent—particularly in John Smith and Henry More—are the marks of passionate personal experience. And finally, they proclaim the supreme importance of morality. Intellectual theology and formal worship are considered relatively unimportant; the essence of religion consists in the cultivation of an ethical will, and, on its practical side, religion manifests itself primarily through moral conduct. In the Platonists' fusion of these three strands is thus mirrored both the past and the future of Anglicanism, is mirrored further the change which was coming over the English religious scene in the middle of the seventeenth century. The extent to which the Platonists contributed to this change may be debated; but that they reflected it, can hardly be denied.

Partly because of their historical position, and partly because of the variety of their own interests, the Platonists' religious thought has been studied from a number of angles. To some,³⁴

³³ The rather unfavorable view here taken of the Augustan religious scene has been somewhat modified and sharply criticized by contemporary eighteenth-century scholars who have blamed nineteenth-century critics for presenting a distorted picture of stagnant calm. I would nevertheless still stand with Professor Bush's statement: "George Saintsbury's phrase 'the peace of the Augustans' inflames the spleen of eighteenth-century scholars, who appear to have an especially sensitive regard for the credit of their sometimes abused period, and who would stoutly maintain that it was full of political, philosophical, and religious crises . . . However, to an outsider, the century, as compared with the seventeenth or the nineteenth or the twentieth, does look relatively comfortable and relaxed," Douglas Bush, *Science and English Poetry* (New York, 1950), p. 51.

³⁴ Good examples are Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1945), pp. 340–349, and H. C. Baker, *The Wars of Truth* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), pp. 124–131. Needless to say, the various approaches briefly discussed here are by no means mutually exclusive, and many of the scholars mentioned stress one aspect while yet

they represent—together with Milton—a dying, though glorious, flicker of the fusion of faith and reason embodied in the great tradition of religious humanism. To others, who view them rather in relation to their contemporaries, they represent a mediating force opposed to Puritanism on the one hand and Prelacy on the other.³⁵ Dean Inge finds that the Cambridge group is in the “Platonic tradition” of a “spiritual” religion which rejects formalism, dogmatism, and ecclesiasticism, whether of the Protestant or Catholic variety. In a similar vein, the Quaker historian, Rufus Jones, looks upon the Platonists as part of a larger movement—extending over England and the Continent, and going back to the Reformation—toward personal and experiential religion. This “inward” aspect has also been emphasized by Professor Nicolson, who especially developed one side of it—the Platonists’ stress upon the individual and their consequent role as advocates of toleration.³⁶ Probably the most prevalent view is one whose exponents have their eye on the future. Its adherents consider the Cambridge men as being, above all, champions of religious liberty and apostles of the evolving gospel of latitudinarianism; they are seen as heralds of the fresh dawn of rational theology which was presently to dominate both the horizon and the celestial cycle—at least in its English phase.³⁷

The influence of Cambridge Platonism upon the subsequent course of Anglican theology has thus been readily acknowledged and acclaimed by the advocates of that course. A serious study of the possible relation of this circle with the weaker side of Augustan Anglicanism has hardly been attempted, however. Whichcote, More, and their confreres have, as the politicians say, enjoyed a “good press.” Miss Underhill, to be sure, speaks some-

taking account of others. I refer only to their emphases; and even these are often dictated (and justified) by a scholar’s specific subject.

³⁵ See, for instance, J. A. Stewart’s very fine article, “Cambridge Platonists,” *Encyc. of Religion and Ethics*, III, 167–173.

³⁶ W. R. Inge, *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought* (New York, 1926), ch. ii; Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (London, 1914), chs. xv and xvi, and *Studies in Mystical Religion* (London, 1919), ch. xx; M. H. Nicolson, “Christ’s College and the Latitude-Men,” *MP* 27 (1929), 35–53.

³⁷ Tulloch is still the best expression of this view. Most of the subsequent works dealing with the Platonists’ theology merely echo or paraphrase him.

what condescendingly of "the tepid speculations of the Cambridge Platonists,"³⁸ but her voice is definitely in the minority. And well it deserves to be. Anyone who reads the Platonists even casually cannot fail to be inspired. They have a definite personal appeal. They are deeply religious—pious and virtuous men in the best senses of those terribly debased words, and, in a reader of religious sensitivity, they cannot but evoke respect and admiration. Hence, while on the one hand, the adherents of Augustan "rational theology" have adopted the Cambridge men as their own, those who find its simplifications intellectually and emotionally arid have tended to absolve the Platonists of any connection with it. We thus find a number of scholars suggesting that the Cambridge circle was somewhat isolated, out of joint with the times and exerting little influence upon them. In writing of the Platonists, so perceptive a scholar as A. C. McGiffert declares that "the spirituality of these men and their emphasis upon immediate apprehension of God and divine things were out of line with the tendencies of the period in which they lived, and their influence was but circumscribed and temporary."³⁹ McGiffert goes on to criticize Tillotson and his circle, and rather vigorously so, but the possibility that they might somehow be linked to the Platonists he does not even pause to consider.

And yet, in comparing the Cambridge men with the leading theologians of Restoration Anglicanism, one is confronted not only by differences but by striking similarities. A number of key specific ideas—as distinguished from their respective total positions—are common to both. The emphasis upon practical morality, the deprecation of dogma, the distaste for mystery, the streak of anti-intellectualism, the passion for simplicity, the desire for toleration, the tendency toward compromise, the assumption of the primacy of reason, the social concern, the acceptance of the prevailing ecclesiastical discipline, even a touch of Erastianism—these are all elements as evident in Whichcote as in Tillotson or Locke. The context and the emphasis vary, to be sure, and the difference is often crucial, but the resemblances nevertheless remain, and they are formidable.

³⁸ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, 12th ed. (London, 1930), p. 72.

³⁹ *Protestant Thought Before Kant* (New York, 1929), p. 194.

It may, of course, be argued that the similarity is purely coincidental, that perhaps the movements, directly unrelated, are, at most, cognate aspects of some more general trend. One may be pardoned for skepticism, however; for the points of contact appear to be numerous, and they include some of the most prominent Restoration clergymen. Tillotson spent three years (1654-1657) as a tutor at Clare College in Cambridge, and later delivered the eulogy at Whichcote's funeral. Tenison and Stillingfleet, subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of Worcester respectively, were likewise Cambridge students, and all three probably frequented Whichcote's highly popular Sunday discourses. John Sharp, later Archbishop of York, was a student at More's own college, probably a student of More himself; in any event, the two became personal friends and later corresponded. Another friend and correspondent was the Bishop of Dromore, George Rust, whose *Discourse on Truth* More annotated in his latter years. Simon Patrick and Edward Fowler, Bishops of Ely and Gloucester respectively, wrote spirited defenses of the Cambridge "latitude-men."⁴⁰ Looking beyond the clerical circle, one may point out Locke (considered, among other things, a leading theologian in his day), who spent a number of years at the home of Cudworth's daughter, Lady Masham; or perhaps Shaftesbury, who published a number of Whichcote's discourses posthumously and added a highly laudatory preface.

Clearly, we are dealing here with something more than a merely tangential relation. Contemporaries recognized the nature of the kinship fully. In a famous passage, Burnet credits the Platonists with changing the whole course of English religious life. After lamenting the worldliness which had overtaken the Church immediately after the Restoration, he declares that "if a new set of men had not appeared of another stamp, the church

⁴⁰ *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men* (Cambridge, Eng., 1662), by S. P., is usually ascribed to Patrick. The ascription has occasionally been disputed, e.g., by Ryan, *The Reputation of Aquinas*, p. 109. But in any event, his *A Friendly Debate Between a Conformist and a Non-Conformist*, 5th ed. (London, 1669), and its two continuations (1669 and 1670), contain many of the Platonists' characteristic ideas. See also Edward Fowler, *The Principles and Practices of Certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England Abusively Called Latitudinarians*, 2nd ed. (London, 1671).

had quite lost her esteem over the nation. These were generally at Cambridge, formed under some divines, the chief of whom were Drs. Whichcot, Cudworth, Wilkins, More, and Worthington . . . The most eminent of those, who were formed under those great men I have mentioned, were Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Patrick.”⁴¹ Yet the affinity has been insufficiently recognized. Critics have apparently been repelled by the notion that the cold moralism of the eighteenth century could somehow be partially derived from the Platonists’ winged words. Writing a century ago, F. D. Maurice—himself an eminent liberal theologian—indeed knew better. Summarizing the results of Cambridge Platonism, he stated that “only the moral protests of these doctors held their ground. Only the aid which they gave to the belief that common right doing is more important than opinions was remembered. They begot a race of moralizers whom we have learnt to look back upon as respectable and instructive, but as unable to do any great work for the renovation of human society, for the assertion or discovery of truth.”⁴² In a slightly different vein, a similar sentiment was echoed by Stoughton, who singled out the Platonists’ “attempts to determine and establish the higher position of what is moral, in comparison with what is intellectual in Church life and in Church creeds,” as leading ultimately to an “inexcusable neglect” of dogma. “The profitableness of virtue, and the reasonableness of religion,” he concluded, “became the all-absorbing themes. Hard, dry Rationalism, bearing a Christian name, with never-ending discussions on evidences, appears throughout the first half of the eighteenth century as a development of the weak side of the Cambridge divinity in the seventeenth.”⁴³

Theirs has been a minority opinion, however. Most students who have collated the Cambridge group with their successors have either acknowledged the kinship and proceeded to acclaim it with Tulloch, or have been careful to disengage the two groups in order to safeguard the Platonists’ reputation. Basil Willey may

⁴¹Gilbert Burnet, *History of His Own Time* (London, 1838), pp. 127, 129.

⁴²*Modern Philosophy*, p. 350.

⁴³John Stoughton, *History of Religion in England (1640–1850)* (London, 1881), II, 269–270.

serve as a good example. As evidence, he is all the more illuminating because he realizes that both groups were closely connected. Declaring that "the Platonists, for all their 'modernism,' did not contribute to the decline of religion which was undoubtedly taking place in the latter half of the century," he goes on to compare them with Locke:

Locke admired Whichcote's sermons and was intimate with the family of Cudworth; he is connected by many a thread, both intellectual and personal, with the Latitudinarians. But when we turn from Smith or Whichcote to Locke's writings on religion, we feel that we have left both religion and poetry behind, and entered wholly into the "cooler element of prose." It is noticeable that Locke habitually speaks of *mathematical* certainty as the perfect type of the certainties reached by demonstration; and the highest testimonial he can give to a religious belief is that it has the same degree of evidence as a geometrical proof. It was this belief in the unique claims of mathematics, shared by him with Hobbes and the Cartesians, which led Locke to believe that morality, which he took to be "the proper science and business of mankind in general," was capable of mathematical demonstration.⁴⁴

If we turn to the Platonists, however, we find them making the very same claims. "In Morality," says Whichcote, "we are sure as in Mathematics."⁴⁵ More writes in a similar vein. In the "Epistle Dedicatory" prefacing his first major prose work, *An Antidote against Atheism* (1652), he speaks of "this Truth of the Existence of God being as clearly demonstrable as any Theorem in Mathematicks."⁴⁶ With reference to the fundamental doctrine of providence, More writes to Lady Conway of "the belief of divine Providence and that all things are carry'd on for the best at the long view which I profess I am fully persuaded of as I am of any thing in Mathematicks."⁴⁷ Again, in his *Appendix to the Antidote against Atheism*, written in 1655, More presents mathematical demonstration as the ultimate in certainty. In

⁴⁴ *The Seventeenth Century Background* (London, 1934), p. 281. Actually, neither Locke (*Essay*, IV.iii.18) nor the Platonists said—as did Spinoza, for instance—that morality could be mathematically demonstrated. They only held that its own methods of demonstration were *as* certain as those of mathematics.

⁴⁵ Benjamin Whichcote, *Moral and Religious Aphorisms*, ed. Samuel Salter (London, 1753), no. 298.

⁴⁶ *Ant. Ath.*

⁴⁷ February 16, 1655/6, *Con. L.*, p. 131.

defending the theistic proofs he had presented in the text, More anticipates the objection that "it may be our Faculties are false" (Descartes' *mauvais génie* haunts his imagination), and he admits it. "But," he continues, "it is sufficient for us that we ask no more than what is granted to them that pretend to the most undeniable Methods of Demonstration, and which Geometry her self can not prove, but supposes; to wit, That our Faculties are true."⁴⁸ Nor is this conception limited to More's earlier Cartesian period. In the opening pages of the anti-Cartesian *Divine Dialogues* (1668), he asserts that "the chief Points of Morality are no less demonstrable than Mathematics."⁴⁹ Certainly, Locke's view of the relation of mathematics and morality hardly distinguishes him from the Platonists.

The point raised by Willey is perhaps a minor one, but it illustrates the tendency. There is no question but that radical differences separate the Cambridge group from a figure such as Locke. Willey is no doubt correct in stating that the latter moved in a "cooler element," and again in emphasizing the Platonists' realization "that religious belief is founded not upon 'evidence' but upon 'experience.'"⁵⁰ However, at most, this is only to say that the Platonists did not participate in the decline of religion; "contribute" to it—albeit unwillingly—they certainly did. That the elements their heirs adopted were only part of the Platonists' legacy; that their respective total positions are in many respects essentially dissimilar; that the progeny is far less illustrious than its forebears—all this is indisputable. Yet perhaps it only makes the Platonists' case all the more instructive. For it suggests the possibility that a religion which fails to take sufficient account of intellectual elements—at least, in the process of transmission—inevitably declines, even when presented in an attractive form. The Platonists' distinctive quality, subtle, elusive, and subjective, was one which, as G. R. Cragg has pointed out, could be transmitted, if at all, only with difficulty.⁵¹ The point is that, never-

⁴⁸ *App. Ant. Ath.*, vi.7.

⁴⁹ *Div. Dia.*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Seventeenth Century Background*, p. 280.

⁵¹ See his brief but perceptive study of changes in Restoration religious thought, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, Eng., 1950), chs. iv and v. It might be mentioned also that a number of recent studies reflect an increasing awareness of the Platonists' true relation to—and sig-

theless, the Platonists staked their all on its transmission. Dogma, ritual, intellection—whatever one may think of them—at least set an objective floor for religion; it can sink so low and no lower. These, however, the Platonists tended to minimize. They placed almost all their eggs in one basket, and it proved to have a sizable hole; their death found them leaving their successors little upon which to base their religious life. The inference may be rejected. It might be cogently argued that, due to various factors—the scientific influence, for instance—the religious decline would have occurred regardless of the Platonists. The facts concerning the extent and direction of the Platonists' influence should, in any event, be clear. These are, briefly, that Cambridge Platonism was a considerable force in seventeenth-century English religious life; that it was one of the principal influences shaping the direction of subsequent thought; and that its authority contributed to the movement for the minimizing of both dogma and intellection in religious life, and the emphasis upon simplicity and practical morality.⁵²

nificant influence upon—the course of subsequent English religious thought, e.g., A. W. Argyle, "The Cambridge Platonists," *Hibbert Jour.* 53 (1954), 255–261; Howard Schultz, *Milton and Forbidden Knowledge* (New York, 1955), p. 171; R. L. Colie, *Light and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Eng., 1957), p. 3; and perhaps most significantly, Basil Willey's *Christianity, Past and Present* (Cambridge, Eng., 1952), pp. 88–90.

⁵² As regards More, it might be added that the tendencies manifested in his successors will be seen to have already been evident in his own development, though to a limited extent. He did not go anywhere nearly as far, but he moved in the same direction—from intellectual religion toward practical moralism. As regards the development of the other major Platonists, one can form no judgment, as More is the only one to have published over any length of time. Whichcote's *Aphorisms* and *Discourses* were published posthumously, and they are undated. Smith and Culverwel both died young, and their works, too, were published posthumously. Of Cudworth, we have only the great sermon preached before the House of Commons in 1647, and then the ponderous unfinished *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* some thirty years later in 1678. His *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* did not appear in print until 1731, and the *Treatise of Free Will* not until 1838. The latter is dated, however, and if many of Cudworth's still unpublished manuscripts are also dated, we might be able to trace the course of his development more clearly.

The Simplicity of Comprehension: The Integration of the Intellect and the Will

ONE of the most persistent distinctions in the history of philosophy—certainly, of religious philosophy—has been that of the intellect and the will. Largely implicit in the classics, it reached full expression in the Schoolmen, and thence became one of the dominant themes of European thought during the Renaissance and for a long time thereafter. The dichotomy is employed by Andrewes and Arnold no less than by Aristotle and Aquinas. The schematizations of classical treatises on ethics, the rigorous logic of medieval *summae*, the ponderous accents of seventeenth-century sermonic compendia, or the pervasive irony of *Culture and Anarchy*—all have served as vehicles for its development and expression. Furthermore, this dualism has often formed the very fabric of thought. One operated with it almost instinctively, much as modern writers employ the categories of conscious and subconscious. Often constituting not only the substance but the framework of thought, it has been relevant to a wide range of areas—to religion no less than psychology, ethics as well as epistemology, political theory as well as theology.

Dominant as the distinction has been, however, its validity has not gone unchallenged. Some have objected to the apparent compartmentalization of the psyche. Others have rejected the dichotomy in favor of a tripartite division of intellect, will, and emotion. Most important, however, has been the objection that the distinction, while perhaps valid, is nevertheless secondary. It may be relegated to the background, because the intellect and the will proper are hardly as powerful as its adherents would

have us believe. Much in the vein of at least one school of modern psychology, critics have argued that it is rather raw passion and naked impulse which ultimately dominate the human psyche; that the intellect is principally an organ of rationalization, and the conscious will, as the classics, the Scholastics, and the humanists had known it, merely a figment of the imagination—an imagination nurtured, it is claimed, upon anthropocentric pride; and that, while both intellect and will do indeed function, their direction is determined by unconscious and unruly passion with which (or rather, within which), as with a serpent in a cave, human personality lives as best it can, and over which it can exercise little rational control. Intellect and will, it is contended, are merely secondary; at bottom instinct and libido reign supreme.

In our own minds, such a position is probably associated with certain segments of modern psychology—of whose language Henry More would no doubt have understood very little. Yet, the argument would have struck him as familiar. More was only too well acquainted with its seventeenth-century version. A “famous Countreyman” of his, Thomas Hobbes, was emitting similar rumblings, something about appetite reigning supreme, will being an act—“the last Appetite in Deliberating”—rather than a faculty, and the conception of will as a “rational appetite” being merely a Scholastic chimera. The argument would not merely have rung a familiar bell, however. It would have sounded a battle-charge. Hobbes and Hobbesianism were attacked from many sides in the seventeenth century, but perhaps from no quarter was the assault heavier than from the Cambridge Platonists, and probably from none was it so effective. His materialism, his determinism, his voluntarism—his views on metaphysics, psychology, ethics, epistemology, and theology—were all subjected to penetrating and searching criticism. In political theory, to be sure, the Platonists did not have a very great direct interest; but they recognized the heart of Hobbes’s system, and, leaving the outworks, attacked the citadel. At the center of Hobbes’s system is his view of the will and the intellect—their character, respective roles, and mutual relations. More and Cudworth¹—Hobbes’s chief opponents among

¹ Tulloch (*Rational Theology*, II, 363–366), is probably correct in stating that Cudworth was more intense than More in his opposition to Hobbes.

the Platonists—realized that, upon his terms, their whole moral and religious philosophy was inconceivable. They set out, consequently, to establish their own positions upon very different premises. More's view of the will and the intellect lies at the heart of his system as well, and it is through a study of their respective roles in the religious life that More's thought is best approached.

In attempting to consider the place of will and intellect in More's religious *anschauung*, one must begin with the psychological aspect. It must first be determined that they *do have* a place, as factors actively shaping the course of individual human destiny. Hobbes, in effect, denied the role to both. Neither will nor intellect is for him an active force molding personality and guiding conduct. Intellect is thoroughly hamstrung by Hobbes's empirical materialism. It is not the mind which initiates thought; it is matter and motion. "The world," Hobbes declared, "is governed by opinion,"² and opinion, in turn, by sensation. Sensation, furthermore, does not—as in the Scholastic *nihil in intellectu quod non est prius in sensu*—merely furnish the material of thought. It is the material, formal, and efficient causes all rolled into one; at once the occasion, content, and guiding force. Only its components, matter and motion, are real, all else merely fantasy. The intellect is thus reduced to an essentially passive role. At most, it may move, but it cannot lead; it can perhaps act, but it cannot conduct. Intellect is not so much a faculty guiding man's lower nature, as a composite of the elements indigenous to that nature—sensations and appetites. Reason is reduced to the task of arranging these or selecting from them—and even that must be done in accordance with the patterns of prior sensory contemporaneous association. It can thus hardly rise above its own raw material—material that, upon Hobbes's reading of human nature, is very raw indeed. Nor does the will fare much better. As an independ-

Tulloch holds that, to Cudworth, Hobbes was a sole enemy, the epitome of all he abhorred, while to More he was one of many foes. But this applies only to their metaphysical polemics. As regards ethics and psychology, More was as unyielding as Cudworth, though somewhat more cordial.

² Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature*, in *The English Works*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London, 1841), IV, 70.

ent power or faculty, it is indeed declared to be nonexistent. There is no single "will" as such; there are merely numerous specific volitional acts. And what of the "volition" involved in these acts? It is simply the last in a series of appetites, the desire that, having overcome all the rest, leaves them in a state of potentiality, and itself becomes kinetic: "In *Deliberation*, the last Appetite or Aversion, immediately adhaering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the WILL; the Act (not the faculty) of *Willing*. . . Will therefore is the last Appetite in *Deliberating*."³

To More, however, both will and intellect, individually and conjunctively, had far greater significance. To begin with the latter, More constantly strove to establish its independence of matter, in both its essence and its operations. One of his primary lifelong concerns was proving the existence of spirit. Virtually all his major philosophical works are occupied with the subject—*An Andidote against Atheism* (1652), *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), the *Divine Dialogues* (1668), and of course, the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671). His interest was not purely metaphysical, however; it also touched upon psychology. It was the existence of the *human* spirit that More was most anxious to prove; even materialists, after all, often professed to admit the spirituality of God. Thus, while More always maintained—later against Descartes—that *in existentia*, as it actually is found in the human situation, mind is united to body, nevertheless, he insisted that *in essentia*, with reference to its intrinsic character, it is independent. Hence, in its operation, it need not rely upon the senses, and it may possess a knowledge antecedent and superior to theirs. More constantly placed rational above empirical knowledge. Almost an entire canto in an early poem is devoted to a discussion of "reason, that above the sense doth sit,"⁴ and numerous proofs are adduced for reason's independence and superiority. The tendency is most clearly expressed in the strongly Cartesian *Antidote against Atheism*,⁵ where More describes the

³ *Leviathan*, Everyman ed. (New York, 1950), p. 48, part I, ch. 6.

⁴ *Psychathanasia*, II.ii.5.

⁵ It is not limited to More's Cartesian period, however. His reliance upon "innate ideas" actually increased during his later stages.

triumph of Copernicanism as "but the just victory of Reason over the general prejudice of Sense," and confidently asserts that "every one will acknowledge that Reason may correct the Impresses of Sense . . . But there is no Faculty that can be pretended to clash with the Judgment of Reason and natural Sagacity."⁶ Whether "every one will" is open to question; but More certainly did.

The independence of the intellect and the superior certainty of its knowledge are most forcefully expressed in the Platonists' doctrine of "innate ideas." It is, in brief, a form of apriorism.⁷ It assumes that a number of basic absolute truths have been imprinted upon the soul, or rather, are of its very fabric, being connatural to it. These include the axiomatic truths of science, morality, and religion, as well as fundamental logical principles. The significance of this doctrine for More's thought is considerable, and it will be discussed subsequently. For the moment, it is enough to say that it establishes the mind not only as a repository of knowledge, but as a power for its acquisition and development. Intellect is an independent active force, at once capable and worthy of guiding conduct; it is both a cornerstone and a mainspring of human character.

The place of the intellect within individual personality is thus secured upon a sure footing. Equally secure, certainly, is the position of the will. Here, however, we cannot simply consider the will in itself, but as it stands vis-à-vis the intellect. For we are immediately confronted with the ageless problem of whether it is

⁶ *Ant. Ath.*, I.viii.12. Of course, More recognized the value of experimental science and, in his last twenty years, engaged in it himself. He even criticized excessive theorizing not based on empirical fact; see his letter of June 5, 1665 (*Con. L.*, pp. 240-241). But primacy he gave to rational knowledge.

⁷ Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Kant and the English Platonists," in *Essays Philosophical and Psychological in Honor of William James* (New York, 1908), pp. 265-302, contends that a number of key Kantian conceptions originated with English Platonists of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. He cites More and Cudworth as having anticipated the Kantian a priori, although he holds they did not develop it or define it as thoroughly as Kant (pp. 277 ff). The subject is also discussed by Claud Howard, *Coleridge's Idealism: A Study of Its Relationship to Kant and to the Cambridge Platonists* (Boston, 1924), ch. iv. It might be added that while the theory of innate ideas was developed mostly by More and Cudworth, Whichcote and Smith also assumed it. Culverwel, however, rejected it expressly.

thought which impels desire, or vice versa. In one form or another, the question has been one of the perennial nubs of the free-will controversy, and it loomed particularly large in seventeenth-century discussions of the problem. It is indeed both striking and significant—a reflection, no doubt, of the increasingly introspective and also secular character of modern philosophy—that, beginning with the seventeenth century, modern treatments of free will have tended to concentrate upon the psychological aspect of the problem, the question of its possibility. The reconciliation of divine foreknowledge and human freedom which had challenged the ingenuity of Augustine, Boethius, the Scholastics, and Valla (not to mention Chaucer), is relegated to the background. The controversy over human self-assertion and divine omnipotence that had engaged Augustine and Pelagius—and had more recently brought down the invective of Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* upon Erasmus' head—now becomes secondary. These essentially theological aspects remain, of course, under discussion. In the seventeenth century, we have only to recall Leibniz' *Essais de Théodicée*, Milton's *Christian Doctrine*, or indeed Milton's fallen angels who

reason'd high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate,
Fixt Fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.⁸

However, they are no longer the focal points in the debate. Hobbes, Locke, Hartley, Hume, Kant, Coleridge, Mill, James, Hartmann—virtually all the chief disputants are principally concerned with the psychological aspect. Even so theologically minded a writer as Jonathan Edwards devotes much the larger portion of his *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of . . . Freedom of Will* to epistemology and psychology rather than theology. It is truly noteworthy that the very word “psychology” possibly first enters the English language in Cudworth's *Treatise on Free Will*;⁹ fully four-fifths of which,

⁸ *Paradise Lost*, II, 558–561.

⁹ The earliest listing in the *NED* dates from 1693. However, the word had already been used by Cudworth in the 1670's. See, e.g., *Treatise of Free Will*, ed. John Allen (London, 1838), p. 19. See also Roland Hall, “New Words and Antedatings from Cudworth's *Treatise of Freewill*,” *Notes and Queries* 7 (1960), 428–429.

it might be added, deals with the problem of the relations of the will and the intellect and their bearing upon freedom of the will.

Stated briefly, the problem is this. Intellectual apprehension, it is argued, is determined by its object, and if the will, in turn, is tied to the understanding, then man is caught in the ironclad vise of necessity. And in a very real sense, the question of the will's freedom, as even the determinists occasionally admit,¹⁰ is actually a question of its existence. Freedom is not merely an attribute of volition; it is of its very essence. A determined will is little more than an empty shadow. It may of course still remain powerful, in the same sense that instinct or libido is powerful. But it has completely lost its character, inasmuch as will is no longer conceived of as an expression of human personality. Significantly, Hobbes's view—that man is free inasmuch as he has the *power* to pursue the course he selects, and his actions are only necessitated in that this selection is determined (a materialist version of Augustine's *certum est nos facere cum facimus, sed Deus facit ut faciamus*)—really holds everything but will to be free.¹¹ It is merely another way of saying that will is not an essential element of human personality, is of no real significance in human life. Mill labored mightily to palliate so distasteful a result of deterministic materialism; but surely one must agree with Whitehead's admirably concise statement: "Either the bodily molecules blindly run, or they do not. If they do blindly run, the mental states are irrelevant in discussing the bodily actions."¹² If we are to understand, therefore, More's conception of the will

¹⁰ Cf. Ernst Meumann, *Intelligenz und Wille* (Leipzig, 1920), p. 340: "Im Sinne der allgemeinen Psychologie . . . der Wille ist kein psychischer Elementarvorgang, sondern ein komplexes psychisches 'Gebilde,' das sich im wesentlichen aufbaut aus intellektuellen Vorgängen unter sekundärer Mitwirkung der Gefühle." See also Horace Graham Wyatt, *The Psychology of Intelligence and Will* (New York, 1930), ch. i, who complains that modern psychology has neglected the study of the will as a factor in human personality. Wyatt later goes on to defend free will, distinguishing between a lower volition—the result of impulse—and a higher Volition, the master of impulse (chs. x and xi). The distinction is analogous to the older distinction between rational and irrational appetite.

¹¹ A recent restatement of Hobbes's position (though without reference to him) may be found in Gardner Williams, *Humanistic Ethics* (New York, 1951), chs. xii–xiv.

¹² A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York, 1929), p. 114.

and its function, we must begin by considering its freedom vis-à-vis the intellect; for whether the will is the tail or the dog is a question not merely of its *plene esse* but of its very *esse*.

The problem was discussed with great acumen in both the Scholastic and Platonic traditions; here we shall confine ourselves to pointing out its relevance to More's contemporaries. Some of the greatest names in seventeenth-century philosophy spring to mind immediately. Descartes devoted almost the whole of his *Méditation Quatrième* to a discussion of the intellect and the will. He was not, to be sure, directly concerned with the problem of free will. For as the title—*Du vrai et du faux*—makes clear, he is principally occupied with accounting for the phenomenon of error. The possibility of the *libre arbitrement* he does not explain but takes for granted. But in the course of the discussion he also disposes of the problem of the will's freedom vis-à-vis the intellect. For Descartes argues that error results from the will's directing the intellect to bite off more than it can chew, to apprehend an object which exceeds its capacity. Intellect is thus envisaged as navigating, but it is the will which issues its irrevocable orders from the control tower, and upon occasion it can signal for Icarian flights, crash landings, or simply crashes.¹³ In Descartes' disciple, Malebranche, we indeed find the problem of error linked explicitly with the question of free will, both being aspects of the complex relations of the understanding and the will. The presentation of the Cartesian position, with specific reference to both aspects, constitutes the heart of the first book of his *Recherche de la Vérité*.

Moving on to the Cartesians' archrival, Hobbes, we again find the problem of free will turning—in its empirical aspect—upon the relations of the intellect and the will. Throughout Hobbes's lengthy polemic with Bramhall regarding liberty and necessity, we find the good bishop insisting that will can in some sense function independently, while Hobbes maintains that volition is simply the tail wagged by the dog of cognitive apprehension—"the will follows the last opinion or judgment, immediately preceding the

¹³ For a full discussion of the Cartesian view of the will-intellect problem and a comparison of Descartes and Aquinas on this point, see Etienne Gilson, *La Doctrine Cartésienne de la Liberté et la Théologie* (Paris, 1913), especially pp. 236–285.

action concerning whether it be good to do it or not.”¹⁴ Back across the Channel, we find Spinoza, perhaps the best-known advocate of determinism, “demonstrating” the doctrine by pointing to the will’s absolute dependence upon the intellect.¹⁵ Or, returning closer to home, we encounter Peter Sterry—Cromwell’s former chaplain, and a figure on the periphery of the Cambridge circle—constrained to concede and justify the apparent necessity of sin because, on the one hand, “the Understanding acteth necessarily, being infallibly and irresistibly reduced into act by its Object duly presented,” and yet on the other hand, “the Scripture manifestly teacheth us, that sin entreth into the Soul by the Understanding.”¹⁶ And finally, in Cambridge proper, we have of course, Cudworth, whose fourth possible argument against free

¹⁴ *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, Clearly Stated and Debated between Dr. Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, and Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury* in Hobbes, *English Works*, V, 317. Cf. Leibniz, “Réflexions sur L’Ouvrage de M. Hobbes,” in *Essais de Théodicée*, in *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, ed. Paul Janet (Paris, 1900), II, 372–375. We are confronted with an apparent paradox here in that rationalists like Descartes and Malebranche see will as guiding understanding, while a voluntarist like Hobbes declares for the primacy of judgment. But it is only apparent. As regards Hobbes, the judgment which he sees as guiding conduct bears no similarity to Descartes’ “entendement.” Intellect as a governing body is only enhanced if it governs itself as well as the will, that is, as an aspect of a free human personality. But if it is itself determined by corporeal impressions upon the senses, then it is a mere puppet; it is simply a switchboard registering “motions,” and its rule becomes meaningless.

As regards Descartes, it is quite true, as Gilson states, that “il semble parfois faire ce rôle [i.e., l’influence de la volonté sur l’entendement] si grand et cette influence si prépondérante, que nulle place ne resterait ensuite pour l’action réciproque de l’entendement sur la volonté” (*La Doctrine Cartésienne*, p. 255). However, it is precisely because they *do* value the intellect so highly, that the Cartesians assign so large a role to the will. Only thus can they absolve the intellect from the stigma of being the source of error, of which, let us remember, Malebranche could say in the opening words of the *Recherche de la Vérité*, “L’erreur est la cause de la misère des hommes; c’est le mauvais principe qui a produit le mal dans le monde.” By ascribing error to the will, the Cartesians assign to it the whole kingdom of darkness. And whence shall come salvation? From the intellect, which, if left to itself, can do no wrong. This attitude of course leads to a growing split between the realms of knowledge and of morality—another manifestation of Cartesian bifurcation.

¹⁵ See Benedicti de Spinoza, *Ethices*, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. J. Van Vloten et J. P. N. Land (Hague, 1882), I, 64, part I, prop. 32.

¹⁶ Peter Sterry, *A Discourse of Free Will* (London, 1675), p. 141.

will is that "all volition is determined by the reason of good, or the appearance of the greater good; now the appearances and reasons of good are in the understanding, and therefore not arbitrary but necessary, wherefore all volitions must be necessary."¹⁷

Against this background, it is hardly surprising to find More's discussions of free will centering around the relations of the will to the intellect. Needless to say, More was—to use Bagehot's quaint epithet—a "Freewillist," and a rather vigorous one at that. One cannot but suspect that a sense of personal freedom was a primary factor in More's youthful revolt against the rigorous predestinational Calvinism of his early environment. In any event, we subsequently find him evincing a lifelong interest in the subject. It is already treated in the early *Poems*¹⁸ and, in correspondence conducted only eighteen months before More's death, we still find him discussing the subject with John Norris of Bemerton, then a young disciple of More's and subsequently the leading English apostle of Malebranche's theories.

Omitting the desultory discussion in the *Poems*, we encounter the first truly philosophic treatment in a passage from *The Immortality of the Soul*. As we might have expected, it centers around a criticism of Hobbes; and, by and large, More asserts himself quite creditably. He begins by presenting Hobbes's first—and most formidable—argument: "that whereas," on the one hand, "it is out of Controversy, that of voluntary actions the Will is the necessary cause," and whereas, on the other hand, "the Will is also caus'd by other things, whereof it disposeth not," that is, by "the action of some other immediate agent without it self," "it followeth, that voluntary actions have all of them necessary causes, and therefore are necessitated."¹⁹ More then proceeds to criticize both assertions. The first—"That the Will is the necessary cause of voluntary actions"—he dismisses as "sophistical." It is true—and, one might add, tautological—if by "necessary" we mean requisite; but if we mean necessitating or coercive, it is

¹⁷ *Free Will*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁸ *Psychathanasia*, I.ii.37-59.

¹⁹ *Imm. Soul*, II.iii.1. For an analysis of More's argument see John Laird, *Hobbes* (London, 1934), pp. 289-290, who declares, incidentally, that "in my opinion, Henry More was by far the most effective of Hobbes's contemporary critics on this question."

"utterly false." The brunt of his attack, More—as did Kant in defending free will—then hurls at the second statement. Its refutation he has ready at hand, as he resorts to the "innate ideas," by means of which perception may be self-moved:

That Motion in a large sense, taking it for mutation or change, may proceed from that very Essence in which it is found, seems to me plain by Experience: For there is an Essence in us, whatever we may call it, which we find endued with this property; as appears from hence, that it has variety of perception, Mathematical, Logical, and I may add also Moral, that are not any impresses nor footstep of Corporeal Motion, as I have already demonstrated.²⁰

In a sense, it may be objected that More is really circumventing the main issue. For even if we assume knowledge to come from within, we may still ask whether *that* knowledge does not force assent, and consequently whether the will is not, after all, constrained in that it must seek the objectives reason deems worthy. More himself touches upon the point. Properly speaking, he declares, we should not argue for the freedom of the will, which, abstractly considered, "of it self is but a blind Power or Operation," but rather for the freedom of the soul, "that Essence which is endued with Will, Sense, Reason, and other Faculties." From this aspect, Hobbes's "first assertion now at first sight appears a gross falshood, the Soul being endued with Understanding as well as Will, and therefore she is not necessarily determined to will by external impresses, but by the displaying of certain notions and perceptions she raises in her self, that be purely intellectual."²¹ More apparently means that in treating the will, we must consider it within the context of the whole complex of human personality. Thus, while still adhering to the freedom of the will—that More is denying this is unthinkable—he insists that we keep in mind the conditions under which that freedom is exercised, is indeed made possible. These, he asserts, include the soul's innate knowledge and its ratiocinative powers. *Within* those conditions, however, he of course still maintains that it is the will which enjoys freedom. More precisely, he is probably pointing to the view that we should not think of the soul as acting via departmentalized faculties in a step-by-step procedure, but rather as judging and

²⁰ *Imm. Soul*, II.iii.7.

²¹ *Imm. Soul*, II.iii.10.

willing immediately, though within the context of other aspects of its previous activity.²² To this view we shall find him presently inclining, while yet insisting that *within* the *whole* soul, it is only the will which is free.

More's next discussion of the psychological aspect of free will occurs in the *Enchiridion Ethicum*. We may, however, omit it for the nonce, reserving it for more fruitful analysis in another connection. What is immediately relevant, in any event, was repeated by More in his final treatment of the question, in the course of his correspondence with Norris. A recent sermon of Norris's had criticized faculty psychology:

I shall no longer consider the Understanding and Will as Faculties really distinct from the Soul, but that the Soul does immediately Understand and Will by it self, without the Intervention of any Faculty whatsoever. And that for this Reason, Because in the contrary Hypothesis, either Judgment must be ascribed to the Will, and then the Will immediately commences Understanding, or the Assent of the Will must be blind, brutish, and unaccountable; both which are as great Absurdities, as they are true Consequences.²³

More opens the discussion by referring to the sermon, and he notes with approval Norris's opposition to "talking of the Will and Understanding, as Faculties really distinct either from one another, or the Soul her self," but he goes on to criticize him for

²² See *Free Will*, pp. 19-24, where Cudworth criticizes the older "faculty" psychology rather sharply; see also J. A. Passmore, *Ralph Cudworth: An Interpretation* (Cambridge, Eng., 1951), pp. 41-47. Cudworth's argument is followed very closely by Locke (*Essay*, II.xxi.17-21) on this point. One passage on the tautology of saying that the will wills (it is compared to saying that the faculty of running runs) is virtually identical. Perhaps Locke, as a friend of Cudworth's daughter, Lady Masham, saw the manuscript, or if not, heard the argument verbally. Hall argues that Locke probably saw the manuscript but perhaps only as late as 1695-1700, so that only revisions of the *Essay* were affected (*Notes and Queries* 7 [1960], 432). Cf. also *Bramhall-Hobbes Debate* in Hobbes, *English Works*, V, 316. "First, this [i.e., the will's dependence upon the understanding] is no extrinsical determination from without, and a man's own resolution is not destructive to his own liberty, but depends upon it. Secondly, this determination is not antecedent, but joined with the action. The understanding and the will are not different agents, but distinct faculties of the same soul." Bramhall advances these as two separate arguments, but if the type of free will in which he believes is to be maintained, it would appear that the first must stand or fall with the second.

²³ A *Collection of Miscellanies*, 4th ed. (London, 1706), p. 274.

running "into an unnecessary Nooze of Fatality, by granting the Soul necessarily wills as she understands; you know that of the Poet,—'Video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor'—And for my Part, I suspect there are very few Men, if they will speak out, but they have experienced that Truth."²⁴ Norris's solution—that while the soul "necessarily wills as she understands and necessarily understands as the Object appears to her," she nevertheless remains free inasmuch as she can avoid the object altogether and refuse to consider it²⁵—is then presented, but only to be rejected. More makes two criticisms. First, even granting Norris's argument that the soul's freedom is constituted solely in her power to extend or withdraw a degree of "Advertency or Attention," freedom still rests with the will. For it is up to *it*, rather than to the intellect, to decide whether or not attention should be exerted.²⁶ The second criticism cuts deeper, and brings us upon one of More's most characteristic ideas. Will does not merely initiate thought, but conditions it. For, as More had learned from "the Platonists and mystical divines," moral purification is the prerequisite to all true knowledge: "Wherefore, the true Ground of our being able and free to chuse what is best, consists rather in the Purity of the Soul from Vice, than in Advertency and Attention

²⁴ January 16, 1685/6, in *Norris-More Corr.*, pp. 153–154.

²⁵ Norris was a disciple of Malebranche, and the solution he presents here is essentially that of the *Recherche de la Vérité*, I.i. He was also influenced by Aquinas, however, and elsewhere he follows the Thomistic solution closely. See John K. Ryan, "John Norris: A Seventeenth-Century English Thomist," *New Scholasticism* 14 (1940), 109–145. The soul's inclination "to good in general, first moves the understanding, which as the Schools allow, is moved by the will quoad exercitium actus, tho' not quoad specificationem. And then the understanding Moves the will as to particular and actual Volitions concerning particular Goods . . . Both move one another, tho' in different respects." John Norris, *Theory and Regulation of Love*, 2nd ed. (London, 1694), pp. 26–27. Cf. *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 82, art. 4; I–II, q. 9, art. 1.

Cf. William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York, 1890), II, 561–562: "The essential achievement of the will, in short, when it is most 'voluntary,' is to ATTEND to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind . . . Effort of attention is thus the essential phenomenon of will." And again: "The question of fact in the free-will controversy is thus extremely simple. It relates solely to the amount of effort of attention or consent which we can at any time put forth. Are the duration and intensity of this effort fixed functions of the object, or are they not?" (p. 571).

²⁶ *Norris-More Corr.*, pp. 154–155. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 82, art. 8.

to the Object, while the Mind is vitiated and obscured for want of due Purification.”²⁷

In his next and final letter, More expands somewhat upon these remarks. With respect to the Socratic view of vice as error, we must distinguish, he declares, between the knowledge of cognition and the knowledge of conviction; between mere intellectual apprehension and an “inward sense” irradiating—and being irradiated by—the whole human personality:

And as for that Maxim, *Omnis peccans ignorat*;²⁸ If it be true in that Universality, the Sense is, that whoever sins, it is out of defect of either Notional knowledge or inward sense, such as accompanies real Regeneration; in which sense the *anaithetoi* Insensati in Scripture are to be understood; and on the contrary the Pythagorick *euaithesia*. Those that want this *euaithesia* though they have a Notional knowledge of the thing, yet they may sin, and that from the want of this sensibility of Spirit. But he that is from God sins not, because the seed remains in him, this life or sensibility in the New Birth, which is an higher and more effectual Principle than Notional Knowledge. Which is not able to determine the choice of the Soul to a Moral or Spiritual Object without the accession of the other. For Life and Sense can only counterpoise Life and Sense, not mere Notion.²⁹

True knowledge, as Plato emphasized repeatedly, does not consist in mere superficial intellectual apprehension. It must strike at the very roots of one's being. The government economist knows unemployment in one sense, and the idled laborer in quite another. The pauper's knowledge of poverty is very different from that of the social worker. In the doctor, knowledge of disease stirs interest and curiosity; but in the suffering patient it strains every fiber and tingles every nerve. And of course our moral knowledge of good and evil must be of the keenest order. Ultimately, therefore, the will is free, for it is only by the exercise and exertion of volition that the soul penetrates to true knowledge, that the ascent from the level of “Notional knowledge” to the heights—and depths—of

²⁷ *Norris-More Corr.*, p. 155.

²⁸ More also quotes and denies the Socratic maxim in *Ench. Eth.*, III.ii.3. In *Imm. Soul*, III.x.6, however, he appears to accept it substantially and even applies it to genii. “It is very hard to conceive that there are many Rational Beings so degenerate as to take pleasure in ill, when it is no good to themselves. That Socrates his Aphorism, *Pas ho mochtheros agnoei*, may be in no small measure true in the other World, as well as in this.”

²⁹ *Norris-Core Morr.*, p. 178.

"inward sense" is attained. For the purified heart does not merely impel thought, but informs it and activates it. The will is indeed—as More had called it earlier—the "vital Center" of the soul. On this characteristic and inspiring note—sounded in More's last published writing—we may conclude our brief survey of his view of the psychological place of the will and the intellect.

II

Empirically, then, More conceives both the will and the intellect as capable of fulfilling a valid function. Volition, as the fundamental expression of human personality, is the ultimate determinant of conduct, and it is its own master. But its freedom is only meaningful insofar as it acts rationally; that is, to the extent that it is exercised within a framework furnished by the intellect, and on the basis of that framework. The intellect, in turn, is not dependent upon the senses. It has its own *datum* and is itself the source of its basic concepts, which it can then either develop abstractly or apply empirically. It is thus the master of experience, rather than its slave, an overseer and not an outgrowth. These, to More, are the *facts*. We must now turn to consider his *values*, to determine the extent to which will and intellect, separately or conjunctively, *should* be exercised. We move, in short, from the empirical to the axiological realm. And again, the relations of the will and the intellect are crucial. For it is around his conception of the roles of the intellect and the will in the religious life that More's religious thought is built; and it is only through a consideration of that conception that More's basic outlook becomes clear, as his significant ideas are brought into view.

The core of More's religious outlook is not so much an idea as an ideal. It is deiformity. His whole ethical and theological thought is governed by this concept. In the annals of Platonism, as in numerous other systems, this ideal has of course a long and honorable history, and it is the chief legacy which More received from the Platonic tradition. In Plato himself, it is implicit virtually everywhere, but the most relevant *locus classicus* is a famous digression in the *Theaetetus*. In a passage worn thin by quotation, Socrates links deiformity with the other-worldliness and the ethical bent of Platonic idealism. "Wherefore," he tells Theodorus,

we ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible: and to become like him, is to become holy, just, and wise . . . The truth is that God is never in any way unrighteous—he is perfect righteousness; and he of us who is the most righteous is most like him.³⁰

Plotinus quotes this passage, and proceeds to make it the basis of his tractate, "On Virtue"—"What could be more fitting than that we, living in this world, should become Like to its ruler?"³¹ Subsequently, the concept became one of the dominant themes of the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions. The Cambridge men—in whom, of course, it was reinforced by the Biblical tradition—are virtually engrossed by it. Burnet declares that the Platonists' purpose was to make men "consider religion as a seed of a deiform nature,"³² and the ideal dominates all their thought. Whichcote, the energizer of the group (though not, in any real sense, its seminal mind—the spark plug rather than the motor), is fully absorbed by it. "Religion," he declares in an aphorism, "*is tis homioisis theou, kata to dunaton anthropou*, the being as much like God as Man can be like him."³³ "For this is our religion," runs a passage in the *Discourses*, "a divine participation, and to imitate him whom we worship." And again, "For this is the sum of religion, when we imitate that which we worship."³⁴ Cudworth states that "the best assurance that any one can have of his interest in God, is doubtlesse the conformity of his soul to him,"³⁵ while Smith avers any fruition of God impossible "without an assimilation and conformity of our natures to Him in a way of true goodness and godlike perfection."³⁶ And if we may move a bit—though not very much—farther afield, we might mention Milton, who, by his own testimony was from his youth steeped in both Plato and Neoplatonism, and in connection with whom the Cambridge Platonists are often mentioned. His first—and essentially more crucial—statement of the purpose of education turns, it may be

³⁰ "Theaetetus," in *The Dialogues of Plato* (New York, 1937), 176a–b.

³¹ Plotinus, *The Enneads* (New York, 1957), 1.2.1.

³² *History of His Own Time*, p. 127.

³³ *Moral and Religious Aphorisms*, no. 591.

³⁴ Benjamin Whichcote, *The Works* (Aberdeen, 1751), I, 311 and III, 204.

³⁵ Ralph Cudworth, *A Sermon Preached before the House of Commons, March 31, 1647* (New York, 1930), p. 9.

³⁶ John Smith, *Select Discourses* (Cambridge, 1859), p. 150.

recalled, upon the ideal of deiformity: "The end then of Learning is to repair the ruines of our first Parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true vertue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection."³⁷

And for More, finally, deiformity represents man's highest goal. The aforementioned passage from the *Theaetetus* he quotes in at least three different places,³⁸ and—what is perhaps more significant—in three different connections. Deiformity he sees as "the true Life of Religion, which is the renewing the Mind into the Image or Similitude of God."³⁹ To return to its pristine purity, to attain a state of moral perfection and thus to resemble and reflect the glory of its Creator—this is the soul's task upon earth, "the perfecting of the Humane nature by participation of the Divine."⁴⁰ This is the essence of More's highest ideal, the "divine life," and the "Divine Vertues" are so called "because they are such as are proper to a Creature to whom God communicates his own Nature so far forth as it is capable of receiving it, whether that Creature be Man or Angel, and so becomes *theanthropos* (Divine Man), or *theodaimon* (a Divine Daemon), that is *theangelos* (a Divine Angel)."⁴¹ Likewise, beatific vision can only result from—indeed perhaps consists in—man's "participation of the Divine"—"For with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light; that is to say, we shall see God who is light, by his communicating his Image to us, and making us Deiform."⁴² It is only in and through deiformity that man attains his supreme bliss and perfection. And it is this vision which informs and inspires More's whole religious outlook, as he anticipates "the finall consummation / Of all things the Creature Deiform, / As Plato's school doth phrase it."⁴³

While the mere ideal of deiformity, abstractly considered, is in

³⁷ *Of Education*, in *Works*, ed. F. A. Patterson, et. al. (New York, 1931), IV, 277.

³⁸ "Defence," i.26; *Ench. Eth.*, II.v.5; *Discourses on several texts of Scripture*, ed. J. Worthington (London, 1692), pp. 387–388.

³⁹ *Myst. G.*, I.xvi.6.

⁴⁰ *Conj. Cab.*, "Preface to the Reader," sec. 3.

⁴¹ *Myst. G.*, II.xii.2. The parentheses appear in the margin.

⁴² *Discourses*, p. 55.

⁴³ *Antimonopsychia*, stanza 25.

itself significant as reflecting an attitude towards the relation of God and man, it is only through a consideration of the nature of God that it attains concrete meaning. "To what Divine Being, then," we must ask with Plotinus, "would our Likeness be?"⁴⁴ Traditional is a tripartite division of wisdom, power, and goodness, as the fundamental attributes. But while the trichotomy is more or less a commonplace, the question of emphasis is something else again. Religious thought has been divided into basically two camps. It has been generally assumed that the untrammelled and absolutely arbitrary exercise of power somehow indicated its possession in a more eminent degree, and by "power" furthermore, has often been meant principally the power to punish. Consequently, the attributes of wisdom and goodness have tended to become conjoined, thus leaving one group insisting chiefly upon arbitrary omnipotence, while the other raised the standard of a rational beneficence. Put in other terms, it has been a question of whether God was to be viewed as being ruled essentially by His own will or by rational absolutes.⁴⁵ The problem is of course an ageless one. It goes back at least to Plato, who has Socrates ask Euthyphro "whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or whether holy because it is beloved of the gods,"⁴⁶ a question which Professor Shorey declared to be "still unsettled."⁴⁷ In the Middle Ages, it was very widely debated.

⁴⁴ *Enneads*, 1.2.1.

⁴⁵ In religious thinkers it is of course only a question of emphasis. Others, particularly when confronted by the prevalence of evil, push the division further and insist that the two aspects are indeed irreconcilable. Celebrated expressions of this view are Leslie Stephen's essay, "An Agnostic's Apology," in *An Agnostic's Apology and Other Essays* (London, 1893), pp. 1-41, and some pages in John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* (New York, 1924), pp. 28-30, and in his *Three Essays on Religion* (New York, 1874), pp. 38-41, 112-113, 116-117.

⁴⁶ "Euthyphro," in *Dialogues*, 10a. The passage is mentioned by Cudworth, *Sermon*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ Paul Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago, 1933), p. 459. He beclouds the issue, however, by quoting Dean Inge (*Christian Ethics*, p. 409): "A thing is not right because commanded by God . . . a thing is commanded by God because it is right." Similarly, A. E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (London, 1949), p. 151, who refers to Cudworth and Hobbes, says Socrates' question "amounts to asking whether acts of piety, or more generally virtuous acts, derive their character of being right from the mere fact of being commanded, or are commanded because they are antecedently *intrinsically*

Aquinas emphasized the rational character of God, that is, His acting in accordance with certain absolute principles which are, to be sure, conceived as being of His essence, while Scotus, and particularly Ockham, advanced the voluntarist position that the Divine Will could be subject to no restrictions, internal or external. After the Reformation, the controversy continued unabated. Calvinists and Lutherans, generally exalting the Divine Power, stressed its arbitrary exercise, while a humanist like Erasmus declared that "power without goodness is unmitigated tyranny; without wisdom it brings chaos, not domain."⁴⁸ One might cite Perkins and Hooker as English instances of the rival attitudes, but it is in the seventeenth century that the controversy really burst into full bloom.⁴⁹ And again we find Hobbes and the Platonists occupying the center of the stage. The question was indeed touched upon in the course of Hobbes's debate with Bramhall. The former held that the same act which, performed by a man, would be unjust, if performed by God must be necessarily just because "the power, which is absolutely irresistible, makes him that hath it above all law, so that nothing he doth can be unjust."⁵⁰ Bramhall's position is equally clear: "Power doth not measure and regulate justice, but justice measures and regulates power. The will of God, and the eternal law which is in God

right." The concept of command, however, introduces an entirely different question. Plato speaks with reference to God, but commands refer to man. It is entirely possible that an action which is "neutral" with respect to God, may, once commanded, become intrinsically "right" with respect to man, because in him, obedience to God is, in itself, a virtue. Cudworth, it is true, denied this, holding that God commands only such things as are "right" for man, *physei*, independently of their being commanded. But between this position and Hobbes's view that command is the *only* basis of virtue, there is room for a third opinion, and one cannot assume that Plato would necessarily have agreed with Cudworth. See also C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London, 1943), pp. 88-90.

⁴⁸ *The Education of a Christian Prince*, ed. L. K. Born (New York, 1936), p. 158.

⁴⁹ For an interesting discussion of an instance of remarkable ambivalence on this question, see Robert Hoopes, "Voluntarism in Jeremy Taylor and the Platonic Tradition," *HLQ* 13 (1950), 341-354. The theme has also been discussed in connection with Milton. See, among others, M. H. Nicolson, "Milton and Hobbes," *SP* 23 (1926), 405-433, and Douglas Bush, *Paradise Lost in Our Time* (New York, 1948), pp. 39-43.

⁵⁰ Hobbes, *English Works*, V, 146.

himself, is properly the rule and measure of justice . . . See then how grossly T. H. doth understand that old and true principle, that the will of God is the rule of justice; as if by willing things in themselves unjust, he did render them just by reason of his absolute dominion and irresistible power.”⁵¹

It was from Cambridge, however, that the strongest challenge to Hobbes appeared. The opposition was given fullest expression by Cudworth, whose *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* is a lengthy—and brilliantly effective—attack upon the voluntarist position. But he was not the only one to take up the cudgels; the Platonists, to a man, insisted upon objective truth as intrinsic in the Divine Nature, and directing its exercise of power. More is certainly no exception. Allusions to “that Reason or Law eternal which is registered in the Mind Divine”⁵² abound in all his works, though for his fullest explicit discussion of the rationality of God one must turn to his *Annotations* upon George Rust’s *A Discourse of Truth*, written in the twilight of More’s life. Rust, like Cudworth, had pointed out that voluntarism introduces ethical and epistemological anarchy, inasmuch as everything is dependent upon pure will, or even whim. In defending Rust’s views, More opens by ridiculing the relativism implicit in his opponents’ position, asking “whether if God would a Football might not be as good an Instrument to make or mend a Pen withal, as a Pen-knife.”⁵³ He goes on to criticize the Cartesians who “do not stick to assert, that, If God would, he could have made that the whole should be lesser than the part, and the part bigger than the whole.”⁵⁴ For the exposition of his own view,

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, V, 136.

⁵² *Ench. Eth.*, I.iii.5.

⁵³ *Annotations upon the Discourse of Truth* (London, 1682), pp. 174–175.

⁵⁴ *Annotations*, p. 175. Despite his latter-day opposition to Cartesianism, More here spares the master himself. Surely, he says, when Descartes said that God could have created a universe in which the Pythagorean theorem would be false, he must have been joking. More also attacked Descartes’ position in the *Divine Dialogues*, p. 65, and “Scholia,” pp. 529–530, and in the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (London, 1671), “Praefatio ad Lectorem,” secs. 6–7. In all these places, he declares Descartes was merely in jest, but complains that his students have taken him seriously. As a matter of fact, however, Descartes did advance this position explicitly. His clearest statement was set forth in reply to the sixth set of objections against his *Meditations*: “Ie dis qu’il a esté impossible qu’une telle idée ait precedé la determination de la volonté de Dieu par une priorité d’ordre, ou de nature, ou de raison raisonnée, ainsi qu’on la nomme dans l’Ecole, en forte que cette idée du

More then turns to the jargon of Neoplatonism.⁵⁵ He develops a distinction between two aspects of the Divine Intellect. There is, first, "the Divine Understanding Exhibitivite, which is the Intellectual World . . . *to pedion tes aletheias*, the vast Champion or boundless field of Truth . . . and Fountain of Intellectual Light. That is, according to the Platonick Dialect, of those steady, unalterable and eternal Idea's (*to gar eidos zos*) of the natures and respects of things represented there in the Divine Understanding Exhibitivite in their Objective Existence."⁵⁶ Secondly, there is the Divine Understanding "Conceptive, Observative, or Speculative,"⁵⁷ by which, as it were, God "knows" in the capacity of an observer. This second aspect is principally introduced, however, only for the purpose of explaining away a number of Rust's statements, and More is mostly concerned with establishing the existence of the "Exhibitivite" aspect, the *nous noetos* in which the Ideas are constituted and with which they are coeternal. He thus validates the objectivity of truth in seeing it as an integral element of a rational Deity.

The objection that the conception of God as being guided by reason derogates from His power by imposing limitations upon it, is met by More headon. Indeed, he turns the tables upon his critics by pointing out that *their* attitude, rather than (as often charged) his own, discredits God by conceiving Him in terms of "a more refined Anthropomorphism," as being torn between "an extravagant and undetermined lust or appetite," on the one hand, "and an Intellectual or rational Principle," on the other. "But this," More continues,

is a gross mistake. For there is no such blind and impetuous will in God upon which any Intellectual Laws were to lay a restraint, but his whole

bien ait porté Dieu à l'élire l'un plutost que l'autre." (*Sixièmes Réponses*, in *Oeuvres*, ed. Charles Adam et Paul Tannery [Paris, 1910], IX, 233). For a discussion of Descartes' views and of the controversy which—especially in Holland—developed around them in the generation following his death, see O. M. Griffiths, *Religion and Learning* (Cambridge, Eng., 1935), pp. 54-67.

⁵⁵ This question is not necessarily related to the problem of the Platonic Ideas, but More treats it as such.

⁵⁶ *Annotations*, p. 264.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 261. Throughout, More writes as if the distinction were Rust's, but at one point he does admit "the author nowhere takes notice of that Distinction" (p. 263).

nature being pure and Intellectual, and he acting according to his own nature . . . he acts with all freedom imaginable, nor has any chains of restraint laid upon him, but is at perfect liberty to do as his own nature requires and suggests. Which is the most absolute liberty that has any sound or shew of Perfection with it, that can be conceived in any Being.⁵⁸

Elsewhere, we find More applying this conception to specific problems, sometimes rather daringly. Thus, in accordance with his view that a spirit is by definition "indiscernible," More declares that, while God could annihilate a spirit, as long as it existed, He could not divide it.⁵⁹ Similarly, he holds that God could not create perfect matter, imperfection being of its very essence.⁶⁰ Even more revealing is his discussion of the interminable problem of foreknowledge and free will. More solves the antinomy by simply canceling one of the terms. God, he asserts, actually does not have absolute foreknowledge of human actions. This does not constitute an imperfection, however, since He nevertheless has as much knowledge as the nature of the situation will permit, that is, conditional knowledge.⁶¹ If such a position seems somewhat extreme, it serves to dramatize More's insistence upon the essential rationality of God and His fundamental harmony with the *eternae rationes rerum*.

Indeed, in the *Divine Dialogues*, More sees God's very sovereignty as being based upon His rational goodness rather than His power. "Wherein," asks Hylobares—the "young, witty, and well-moralized Materialist" of the *Dialogues*—"wherein is this vast and unlimited Sovereignty of God founded? in his Omnipotency, or in what is it? For some say absolute and irresistible Power can do no wrong." Philotheus is quick to dispel any such notions: "That's a thing, Hylobares, I could yet never under-

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁵⁹ *Div. Dia.*, p. 65; "An Answer to a Letter of a Learned Psychopryist," sec. 9, in Glanvill, *Sadducismus Triumphatus*.

⁶⁰ *Div. Dia.*, pp. 92, 117, 157.

⁶¹ *Ench. Eth.*, III.ii.2; *Div. Dia.*, pp. 41-44. See also pp. 150, 151, 156. In a letter to Anne Conway, More writes that the Licensor had refused to approve the *Divine Dialogues* until the passage on "Prescience" had been changed so that it would appear to express the opinion of one of the characters and not explicitly More's own (May 12, 1668, *Con. L.*, p. 294).

stand, that the most omnipotent Power that is imaginable can ever have a right to do what is wrong . . . No Power, though never so Omnipotent, can claim a right to such an act, no more than any Intellect, never so Omniscient, can claim a right of authentickly thinking that true which is really false." Winking at the obvious fallacy of the supposed analogy, we come to the solution of the original question:

But in answer to your main question, wherein the Right of this absolute Sovereignty in God is founded, I must tell you both distinctly and compendiously at once, That to infinite, permanent and immutable Goodness of right belongs as well Omniscieny as Omnipotency, the one as her Secretary, the other as her Satellitium. But the infinitely-good God is not only of right, but by nature, both Omniscient and Omnipotent. And from these three, his infinite Goodness, Wisdom and Power, issue out all the Orders of the Creation in the whole Universe. So . . . is there not all reason, that he that is so immutably Good, that it is repugnant that he should ever will any thing but what is absolutely for the best, should have a full right of acting merely according to the suggestions and sentiments of his own Mind, it being impossible but that they should be for the best, he having proportionable Wisdom also and Power adjoined to this infinite Goodness, to contrive and execute his holy, just, and benign designs?⁶²

The particular emphasis placed by More upon a goodness guided by reason as the essence of the Divine Nature is graphically illustrated by another passage from the *Divine Dialogues*. He—the speaker is Bathynous, but the narrative obviously autobiographical⁶³—describes his early spiritual progress, how, when he had begun to consider God and “his Nature more distinctly and accurately, and to contemplate and compare his Attributes . . . I did then confidently conclude, that infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, that these three were the chiefest and most comprehensive Attributes of the Divine Nature, and that the sovereign of these was his Goodness, the Summit and Flower, as I may so speak of the Divinity, and that particularly whereby the Souls of Men become Divine.” The link of reason and beneficence is then made manifest in the following paragraph, in

⁶² *Div. Dia.*, pp. 301–302.

⁶³ Ward, *Life*, pp. 22 and 138, already declared the narrative of Bathynous’ “vision” to be autobiographical.

which More refers neither to the trichotomy, nor to the single "Summity and Flower," but to "these two chiefest Attributes of God, his Wisdom and his Goodness."⁶⁴

The emphasis upon "these two chiefest Attributes" is of special importance in connection with the concept of deiformity. They are, first, in one sense, the very basis of the ideal itself. Being ethical qualities, wisdom and goodness can serve as patterns to be imitated, which power clearly cannot. One should be wary of generalization, but I think it may be said that a theology which stresses the Divine Power and the arbitrariness of God's will often tends to see the central problem of religion as coming to terms *with* God rather than becoming assimilated *to* Him. "All religions," said Kant, "can be divided into those which are *endeavors to win favor* (mere worship) and *moral* religions, i.e., religions of good *life-conduct*."⁶⁵ And it is generally in religions emphasizing the Divine Power that the favor-seeking element predominates, sometimes to the neglect of the moral. Forgiveness rather than deiformity is the keynote; it is more a matter of reconciling God to man than man to God. Secondly, wisdom and goodness obviously provide the patterns which guide man in his quest for the *imago Dei*. Thus, Ward reports that, upon his death-bed, More declared "That he had spent all his Time in the state of those Words, 'Quid Verum sit, et quid Bonum, quaero, et rogo; et in hoc Omnis sum:' That what is good, and what is true, were the two great things, that he had always sought and enquir'd after, and was wholly indeed taken up with them."⁶⁶ A passage from the *Enchiridion Ethicum* is even more relevant: "The Di-

⁶⁴ *Div. Dia.*, pp. 246-247. Cf. *Myst. G.*, II.ii.1: "the Idea of God, that is Infinite Wisdom and Goodness."

⁶⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason alone*, trans. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (Chicago, 1934), p. 47. See also McGiffert, *Protestant Thought before Kant*, pp. 24-26, who discusses this question in connection with Luther, arguing that Luther was principally motivated by the need for obtaining the divine favor rather than by ethical considerations. "Not to attain moral purity but to be on good terms with God was the supreme need of his being" (p. 24). This point touches, of course, upon one aspect of the whole controversy over faith and works. See also Anthony Tuckney, "Eight Letters of Dr. Ant[h]ony Tuckney and Dr. Benjamin Whichcote," appended to Whichcote's *Moral and Religious Aphorisms*, ed. Samuel Salter (London, 1753), pp. 4 and 16.

⁶⁶ *Life*, p. 222.

vine Life was not a matter of Sapience only, but was principally to consist in Love, Benignity, and in Beneficence or Well-doing . . . The Perfection of Divine Life is made up of Truth and Well-doing. Wherefore, if men will abide by the Judgment of Aristotle or Pythagoras, or others of the most celebrated, they must own that the Measure of Right Reason is to imitate the Divine Wisdom, and the Divine Goodness, with all our Might.”⁶⁷ The quest for deiformity, then, must move along the two lines—parallel and yet convergent—of wisdom and goodness. In man’s spiritual odyssey, both his rational and his volitional nature must participate. In seeking to approach God by attaining deiformity, man finds the perfection of both his intellect and his will, fused into one harmonious nature in the exercise of the religious life. Let us now attempt to see how More spelled out this ideal in detail.

III

Not in vain has More’s name found its way into the histories of rational theology. The attempt to approach religious problems philosophically, often scientifically, is evident throughout his works. This attitude, furthermore, is often made explicit. Up and down in his writings are strewn passages underscoring the validity of human reason and the importance of rational guidance in all spheres of life, particularly the religious. “For what greater satisfaction can there be to a rational Spirit,” More asks, “than to find himself able to appeal to the strictest Rules of Reason and Philosophy?” and he proceeds to quote “that generous resolution of Marcus Cicero, *‘Rationem, quo ea me cunque ducet, sequar.’*”⁶⁸ Writing against the “enthusiasts’” reliance upon the “inner light” of subjective inspiration, More argues that those who “would, by their wild Rhetorick, dissuade men from the use of their Rational faculties, under pretence of expectation of an higher and more glorious Light, do as madly”⁶⁹ as “some furious Orator” who should persuade a group of nocturnal travelers to beat out their torches and lanterns by convincing them that, in

⁶⁷ *Ench. Eth.*, I.iii.10–11.

⁶⁸ “The Preface General,” sec. 3, in *Philosophical Writings*.

⁶⁹ *Enth. Tri.*, sec. 54.

the glory of their present condition, they could proceed in the dark, unaided by auxiliary artificial light. Against his other theological bugbear, the Roman Catholic Church, More presents a similar charge. By its "pretended infallibility," it has, in taking away the rights of the individual's reason, reduced him to the level of the brute: "Nay what Conspiracy against humane Nature can be more tragical or direful, or what so palpable a Plot to make Mankind mere Slaves and Vassals, and to take away from them that Privilege by which alone they are distinguishable from brute beasts?"⁷⁰ More sees "enthusiasm" regarding reason as unnecessary, and Catholicism dismissing it as untrustworthy. His own *via media* is firmly based upon the belief that it is both indispensable and reliable. It represents, indeed, one aspect of man's deformity:

But for mine own part, Reason seems to me to be so far from being any contemptible Principle in man, that it must be acknowledged in some sort to be in God himself. For what is the Divine Wisdom but that steady comprehension of the Ideas of all things, with their mutual respects one to another, congruities and incongruities, dependencies and independencies? . . . And what is this but *Ratio stabilis*, a kind of steady and immoveable Reason, discovering the connexion of all things at once? But that in us is *Ratio mobilis* or Reason in evolution, we being able to apprehend things only in a successive manner one after another.

While the mode differs, in its essence, More concludes, human reason resembles the divine: "But so many as we can comprehend at a time, while we plainly perceive and carefully view their Ideas, we know how well they fit, or how much they disagree one with another, and so prove or disprove one thing by another: which is really a participation of that Divine Reason in God, and is a true and faithful Principle in man, when it is perfected and polished by the Holy Spirit."⁷¹

The validity of this "true and faithful Principle" derives from the nature and source of the human soul. For deformity, to the Platonists, is not only a religious ideal; it is likewise a metaphysical fact. To quote Whichcote: "We are made in the image of God; not only upon a moral consideration, but upon a natural

⁷⁰ *Myst. I.*, II.xvii.6.

⁷¹ *Conj. Cab.*, "Preface to the Reader," sec. 3.

account: as we are invested with intellectual natures, and so stand in another relation to God, than the creatures below us.”⁷² Indeed, that reason is connatural to the soul because God is reason and the soul is of God, is one of his most persistent themes. More discusses this conception somewhat less frequently, but clearly accepts it no less firmly. “The soul of man,” he declares, “is as it were *agalma theou*, a compendious Statue of the Deity; her substance is a solid Effigies of God.”⁷³ And he is fully explicit in making this metaphysical deiformity the basis for assuming the validity of human intellect—“the Deiform intellect,” More had called it in the *Poems*.⁷⁴ “The Intellect of man is as it were a small compendious Transcript of the Divine Intellect, and we feel in a manner in our own Intellects the firmness and immutability of the Divine, and of the eternal and immutable Truths exhibited there.”⁷⁵

We are here touching upon the familiar concept of “right reason,” which asserts the universal correspondence of the human soul with a set of fundamental absolute truths. This doctrine has of course a long and honorable history. Rising from Stoic springs, it flowed through patristic rivulets into the great streams of medieval thought, ultimately to chart its course along the high seas of Renaissance culture. Its most famous English formulation is to be found in Hooker’s great first book, but it is fundamental to the whole tradition of English humanism. And very rarely did it find more ardent champions than the Cambridge Platonists. One of their favorite texts is taken from *Proverbs* 20:27—“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord,” and for them, “the candle of the Lord is the *recta ratio* of the humanistic tradition.”⁷⁶ It is indissolubly linked with man’s deiform nature: “For Right Reason, which is in Man, is a sort of Copy or Transcript of that Reason or Law eternal which is registred in the Mind Divine.” As such, it becomes the criterion of right action—“The height of Virtue is this, constantly to pursue that which to Right Reason seems best.”⁷⁷ In More, “right reason” acquired broader scope, as it was bound up with the theory of innate ideas, and both

⁷² *Works*, II, 93–94.

⁷⁴ *Psychathanasia*, III.ii.7.

⁷⁶ Bush, *Seventeenth Century*, p. 343.

⁷³ *Ant. Ath.*, I.xi.12.

⁷⁵ *Annotations*, pp. 257–258.

⁷⁷ *Ench. Eth.*, I.iii.5–6.

of these we shall yet have to consider. For the moment, we need only note that it served as a bond linking man with God—as an ideal and as a fact.

In itself, however, reason is a neutral factor. It is not only insufficient but indeterminate, equally capable of being directed to good or to evil, towards God or the devil. More sees it as “the general Principle or common Root” of a “Middle Life,” intermediate between the animal and the divine, and inclinable to either:

This is a short Description of the Middle Life which is neither Animal nor Divine, but is really (what the Astrologians phansy Mercury to be) such as that with which it is conjoined, whether Good or Bad, Divine or Animal. For if Reason be swallowed down into the Animal Life, it ceases not to operate there, but all her Operations then are tinctured with that Life into which she is immers'd.⁷⁸

The light of reason may become a captive organ of rationalization, to the point that, as More pointed out in a letter, it becomes “scarce in the Power of any Man to undeceive one thus impos'd upon by his own Wit, Fancy, and Subtilty of Reason.”⁷⁹ It is the will, as the innermost spring of the soul, that determines the character of human life. For it is, first, in itself, the deepest, the most essential element in the psyche: “And deep desire (the desire of which More speaks is of course for ‘near Union with God’),” More declares,

And deep desire is the deepest act,
The most profound and centrall energie,
The very selfnesse of the soul.⁸⁰

Secondly, as a motive force, it gives purpose and direction to all other facets of the personality, the intellect included. It is consequently in terms of the will that More's conception of the divine life is molded. As the source of human conduct, the will, above all, must be properly channeled. Else, even a small turn may divert all subsequent actions from their true object, God, and toward man's selfish interests.

We verge here upon one of More's loftiest and most persistent

⁷⁸ *Myst. G.*, II.xi.3-4.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Ward, *Life*, p. 116.

⁸⁰ *Antimonopsychia*, stanza 36.

themes. It is that which he had learned from the *Theologia Germanica*—the eradication, root-and-branch, of self-will, the negation of I-hood. If Plotinus had taught More to find God in himself—*reverere teipsum*—the Taulerians had taught him to find—or rather, to place—himself in God. Deiformity in the simplest sense, assimilating ourselves *to* God, is insufficient; one must assimilate *into* Him. Both in his formal works and in his correspondence, More returns to this theme again and again, ringing all the changes upon it. He finds it symbolized in the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden:

The Tree of Life is very rightly said to be in the midst of the Garden, that is, in the midst of the Soul of man; and this is the Will or Desire of man, which is the most inward of all the Faculties of his Soul, and is as it were the *logos spermatites*, or vital Center of the rest, from whence they stream or grow. That therefore is the Tree of Life, if it be touch'd truly with the divine Life, and a man be heartily obedient to the Will of God . . . But if this Will and Desire be broke off from God, and become actuated by the creature, or be a Self-will and a spirit of disobedience, it breeds most deadly fruit, which kills the divine Life in us, and puts a man into a necessity of dying to that disorder and corruption he has thus contracted.⁸¹

In allegorizing his early spiritual experience in *Psychozoia*, More makes "Anautæsthesie" the road to "Fast love, fix'd life, firm peace in Theoprepia land"⁸² and the same note is struck in the concluding paragraph of his *Theological Works*:

This therefore is the Supreme Law and Will of God touching the Purity of his Worship, That we have no Will nor End of our own. For as we are to have but one God, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God,' Deut. 6.4. so we are to have but one Will, even the Will of the God whom we worship. Which we have not, if we have any Self-will or Self-ends unsubordinate to the Will of God.⁸³

The theme runs like a refrain through More's letters to Lady Conway, letters in which the inveterate sufferer is repeatedly urged to find comfort in resignation to the Divine Will. "We must," he writes, "submitt our selves to the will of God and possess our selves in patience, extinguish in our selves the desire of all things but of being of one will with him who has a complete

⁸¹ "Defence," ii.9.

⁸² *Psychozoia*, iii.68.

⁸³ *App. Ant. Id.*, sec. 50.

power over us to deal with us as he pleases.”⁸⁴ Or again, he urges “the necessity as well as the duty of being wholly resigned to God in all things, and not to covett to be our own chusers in any thing but to live in perpetuall subjection to his will.”⁸⁵ The root of the animal life, by contrast, More denominates self-love and he declares that

the scope or aim of all Religious Mysteries is the bringing back fall’n Man into his pristine condition of Happiness, and to lead him again to that high station which he then first forsook when he prefer’d his own Will and the pleasure of the Animal life before the Will of God and that Life and Sense which is truly Divine.⁸⁶

Self-will, whether or not it directly contravenes the expressed Divine Will, is, in its very essence, sin. “We are only forbidden,” Adam tells Satan, “to feed on our own Will, and to seek pleasures apart, and without the approbation of the Will of God.”⁸⁷ It is with the abandonment of “our own will” that regeneration must begin.

In thus becoming—as far as humanly possible—of one will with God, man approaches the state of deiformity; and this in two ways. First, and most obviously, the “vital Center” of his soul henceforth acts in accordance with its great Archetype. Implanted within him is the “Tree of Life” which More interprets as referring to “the Essential Will of God,” by which

is understood the Will of God becoming Life and Essence to the Soul of Man; whereby is signified a more thorough union betwixt the Divine and humane nature, such as is in them that are firmly regenerated and radicated in what is good. Philo makes the Tree of Life to be *eusebeia*, that is, Piety or Religion; but the best Religion and Piety is to be of one will with God.⁸⁸

Secondly, its very act of abnegation is an *imitatio Dei*. For in renouncing its own selfish pursuits in favor of the highest objec-

⁸⁴ July 2, 1655, *Con. L.*, p. 110.

⁸⁵ January 2, 1671/72, *Con. L.*, p. 350.

⁸⁶ *Myst. G.*, I.i.5. The passage is presented by More as a rendering “in our more familiar language” of a remark quoted from an anonymous Platonist. Actually—and significantly—the first half (through “Happiness”) is an almost verbatim translation, but the rest is added by More.

⁸⁷ “The Philosophick Cabbala,” in *Conj. Cab.*, iii.3.

⁸⁸ “The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala,” in *The Defence of the Threefold Cabbala*, ii.9.

tive Good, it acts just as "God himself, who is that pure, free, and perfectly unselfed Love"⁸⁹ acts—in a spirit of disinterestedness. Man thus attains the Kingdom of God within him, whose essence More summarizes in a single sentence:

To be brief, It is the Rule of the Spirit of God in the Soul, who takes the Reins of all our Powers, Faculties, and Affections into his own hand, and curbs them and excites them according to his own most holy Will, that is carried to no particular Self-interest, but ever directs to that which is simply and absolutely the best.⁹⁰

As the source and matrix of the soul's faculties, then, the will directs all human activity. With respect to intellection, however, the will does not merely guide; it affects—and enters into—the very operation. The conception that true knowledge can be achieved only in conjunction with moral virtue is a familiar aspect of the idealism of the Platonic tradition. It is epitomized by a famous passage in the *Enneads*:

If the eye that adventures the vision be dimmed by vice, impure, or weak, and unable in its cowardly blenching to see the uttermost brightness, then it sees nothing even though another point to what lies plain to sight before it. To any vision must be brought an eye adapted to what is to be seen, and having some likeness to it. Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike, and never can the soul have vision of the First Beauty unless itself be beautiful. Therefore, first let each become godlike and beautiful who cares to see God and Beauty.⁹¹

Among the Cambridge men, it was More and Smith—both of whom quoted this passage repeatedly—who expressed this conception most forcefully. The latter's "On the True Way or Method of Attaining Divine Knowledge," in which this idea is dominant, is probably the best known of his discourses. In More, we have already encountered his view of the dependence of knowledge upon morality, first, in the "Praefatio Generalissima," and again in his correspondence with Norris.⁹² It is indeed present through-

⁸⁹ *Div. Dia.*, p. 303.

⁹⁰ *Div. Dia.*, pp. 304–305.

⁹¹ 1.6.9.

⁹² Norris, a more thoroughgoing "rationalist" had denied that vice could impede the processes of thought. Corruption might prevent a man from thinking of a certain subject altogether, but if he did think of it, the actual exercise of intellection remained unaffected. "I confess," he wrote More, "I can easily conceive how a man may be defective in his Attention, but not how Attention it self, if duly applied, can be defective towards true Illumination, though in the midst of Moral Corruptions" (p. 172). It should be

out his works, and has been emphasized by all students of More. It should be noted, however, that the conception is variously expressed. At times, More is content simply to make a purely negative claim; immorality may obscure the mind, making real knowledge impossible. If "the eye of the understanding be shut through Pride, Prejudice, or Sensuality, the mysteries of Philosophy are thereby veiled from it; but if by true vertue and unfeigned sanctity of mind that eye be opened, the Mysteries of Philosophy are thereby the more clearly discovered to it."⁹³ "Sanctity of mind" is here apparently a prelude to knowledge; it seems to precede intellection rather than enter into it. Such is also the burden of More's discourse on a text from *Proverbs* 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "Fear and honour goes before," More comments, "and the Light of God follows after."⁹⁴ "It is plain, that the necessary foundation of true Wisdom is unfeigned Righteousness and Pureness," and More proceeds "to shew you how the purging of a mans Soul takes away those main impediments to truth of Knowledge."⁹⁵ The negative aspect is clearly emphasized when More gives "the Reasons, Why this is the only way that God hath pointed out for the attaining to Wisdom," the second reason being "the Impossibility of true Knowledge and Iniquity in one Subject . . . Wisdom cannot enter into a wicked heart, nor dwell in a body that is subject unto sin: For the Holy Spirit of Discipline fleeth from deceit, and withdraweth himself from thoughts that are without understanding, and is rebuked when wickedness cometh in."⁹⁶

pointed out, however, that Norris was no mere "intellectualist," as his *Theory and Regulation of Love* makes abundantly clear. Indeed, in a later work, he adopts More's position that vice may impede the processes of thought proper, by "beclouding" the intellectual faculties and thus obscuring their vision. See his *Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life*, 2nd ed. (London, 1691), pp. 90-98.

⁹³ *Annotations*, pp. 180-181. ⁹⁴ *Discourses*, p. 93. ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 102. More's *Discourses* are undated, but this one is probably early. In section 11 of the "Preface General" to his *Philosophical Writings* he declares himself pleased to learn from Clerselier that Descartes had exercised "his first style upon that excellent Theme, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom,' . . . it being the very Text upon which my self first common-placed in our College-Chappel." It is very likely this discourse to which he refers.

Elsewhere, however, the relation between knowledge and morality is expressed in positive terms. The purified heart is not merely a prerequisite to knowledge. Nor does it only serve as an impetus, stirring the mind to exertion in the search for truth. Rather, it is itself an aspect of that search. More does not envision simply "the sweet counsels *between* head and heart" of which Wordsworth was to speak. The moral will not only facilitates the quest for knowledge—in the sense, say, that sheer determined will power helped Ben Hogan become a great golfer—but participates in it. For it is only through the united endeavor of the heart and mind that the soul can attain true knowledge—

the best kind of Knowledge, even that which is accompanied with Affection, and hearty Conviction.

And surely it is not for nought that the Spirit of God so frequently in Scripture, names the Heart for the chief seat of Wisdom; which is yet the less marvellous, considering that the Wisdom which the Scripture driveth at, is Practical Wisdom, Moral or Divine, wherein the Heart is much concerned. And the sense and touch of those Truths must pass the Heart, as the Colours do the Eye, before the Mind can give a steady assent to them. For what the Eye is in reference to Colours, that is the Heart in reference to the discrimination of Moral Good and Evil. And for this reason it is, that as Seeing is attributed to the Eye, so is Understanding to the Heart, so frequently in the Scripture.⁹⁷

The heart is here not merely a prerequisite to wisdom, but its very seat.

Equally positive is More's fullest description of the purified intellect, presented in the preface to *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*. More envisions a principle which, while intellectual in nature and therefore *of* reason, he nevertheless prefers to treat as a separate endowment, thus distinguishing it from "reason" as usually conceived. This "principle" More calls "Divine Sagacity":

I should commend to them that would successfully philosophize, the belief and endeavor after a certain Principle more noble and inward than Reason it self, and without which Reason will fault, or at least reach but to mean and frivolous things. I have a sense of something in me while I thus speak, which I must confess is of so retrue a nature that I want a name for it, unless I should adventure to term it Divine

⁹⁷ *Discourses*, p. 39.

Sagacity, which is the first Rise of successful Reason, especially in matters of great comprehension and moment, and without which a man is as it were in a thick wood, and may make infinite promising attempts, but can find no Out let into the open Champaign, where one may freely look about him every way (the *pedion te aletheias*) without the safe conduct of this good Genius.

All Pretenders to Philosophy will indeed be ready to magnifie Reason to the skies, to make it the light of Heaven and the very Oracle of God: but they do not consider that the Oracle of God is not to be heard but in his Holy Temple, that is to say, in a good and holy man, thoroughly sanctified in Spirit, Soul, and body . . . Aaron's Rationale, his *Logion* or Oracle of Reason, did it not include in it the Urim and Thummim, Purity and Integrity of the Will and Affections, as well as the Light of the Understanding?

More then goes on to find Aristotelian support in a remark cited from the *Eudemian Ethics*;⁹⁸ but, as we might have expected, he proceeds to emphasize the religious aspect. Subjectively, "Divine Sagacity" is the reflection of the objective Divine Presence:

This intellectual success therefore is from the Presence of God, who does (*kinein pos panta*) move all things in some sort or other, but residing in the undefiled Spirit moves it in the most excellent manner, and endues it with that Divine Sagacity I spoke of, which is a more inward, compendious, and comprehensive Presentation of Truth, ever antecedaneous to that Reason which in Theories of greatest importance approves it self afterwards, upon the exactest examination, to be most solid and perfect every way, and is truly that wisdom which is peculiarly styled the Gift of God, and hardly competible to any but to persons of a pure and unspotted mind. Of so great concernment is it sincerely to endeavor to be holy and good.⁹⁹

Reason in the highest sense is by no means to be equated with the intellect and its logical faculty. More would have agreed fully with the recent remarks of the very differently oriented

⁹⁸ More assumed that both the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Magna Moralia* were written by Aristotle. In the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, he quotes from them constantly, and always refers them to Aristotle. In our own day, their authenticity has been upheld by Werner Jaeger. See his *Aristotle*, trans. Richard Robinson, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1948), pp. 228-258 and 390-400. Significantly, the *Eudemian Ethics*, which More used extensively, is described by Jaeger as the most Platonic and the most religious of Aristotle's ethical writings.

⁹⁹ "Preface General," sec. 7, in *Philosophical Writings*.

Karl Jaspers: "In common parlance Reason is identical with intellect. It can, in fact, take no step without the intellect, but it goes beyond it."¹⁰⁰ And, More would have added, it goes beyond it precisely because it starts above and beyond it, because it is "the Gift of God" to a soul seeking assimilation to Him. More is careful to distinguish between ordinary "Reason" and "souls Deiform intellectualive."¹⁰¹ Where the "dispred exility/Of slyer reason fails, some greater power/Found in a lively vigorous Unity/With God"¹⁰² must be invoked, and only then does man find his true rational nature. Suffused with this "Divine Sagacity," the human mind is transmuted; and, transported to higher levels, gains a direct insight into truth. Moral virtue informs the purified intellect, and in the process of catharsis the ethical will is itself integrated as a facet of the regenerate mind.

Of course, this is not to say that the will is henceforth directly involved in any and every ratiocinative step. More is not quite so naïve. For one thing, he apparently sees morality as having a bearing only upon religious and philosophical thought. Here he speaks of its being relevant "especially in matters of great comprehension and moment," and elsewhere he makes it clear that he does not include scientific problems. "The Heart," he writes, "is the seat of Conscience; i.e. of Desire, or bent of Will and Knowledge; Knowledge of things Moral or Divine. So in Scripture, we have oft mention of a wise and understanding Heart. And surely if a man observe; in Moral and Pious matters, a man communeth with his Heart, and discovereth deceit and hypocrisie there; as he doth incongruities and falsities in his Brain, where imagination is placed, in Natural and Mathematical Theories."¹⁰³ Secondly, More recognizes that the processes of

¹⁰⁰ *Reason and Anti-Reason in Our Time*, trans. Stanley Godman (New Haven, 1952), p. 38. As employed in this particular context, More's "Reason" approximates Jaspers' "intellect" rather than his "reason." But the change in terms does not invalidate the parallel in thought.

¹⁰¹ *Psychathanasia*, III.i.14.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, III.iv.10.

¹⁰³ *Discourses*, p. 206. See also "An Answer to a Learned Psychopyrist," sec. 34. Coleridge—in *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford, 1907), I, 135—distinguished between religious and scientific truths in this regard, saying of religion "that the evidence of its doctrines could not, like the truths of abstract science, be wholly independent of the will." To cite an eminent contemporary Platonist, A. E. Taylor has somewhere stated that

discursive thought, the "Reason" to which he refers as following upon "Divine Sagacity," are not identical with it. The actual development of a logical proof may, for instance, be a purely "intellectual" endeavor, even taking the term in its usual sense. But More does mean—and this should be emphasized—that the purified will is indissolubly linked with the intellect, actively engaged in the quest for truth. It is very definitely a facet of reason itself—"Aaron's Rationale, his *Logion* or Oracle of Reason, did it not include in it the Urim and Thummim, Purity and Integrity of the Will and Affections, as well as the Light of the Understanding?" "Divine Sagacity" is not manifested in all intellection; but it always remains an aspect of intellect.

Complementing this purified intellect is the will's "Intellectual Love." Mentioned in passing in the *Immortality of the Soul*, it is defined by More in the *Mystery of Godliness*, where it is seen as the essence of charity, one of the three branches of the "Divine Life":

By Charity, I understand an Intellectual Love, by which we are enamoured of the Divine Perfections, such as his Goodness, Equity, Benignity, his Wisdom also, his Justice and his Power, as they are graciously actuated and modified by the forenamed Attributes. And I say, that to be truly transformed into these Divine Perfections, so far forth as they are Communicable to Humane Nature, and out of the real Sense of them in our selves, to love and admire God in whom they infinitely and unmeasurably reside, is the truest and highest kind of Adoration, and the most grateful Praising and Glorifying God that the Soul of Man can exhibit to her Maker.¹⁰⁴

More's fullest discussion of "Intellectual Love" occurs in the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, however, and it is in that context that we must consider it. In coming to his "abridgment of morals," we encounter More's clearest portrayal of a fusion of the soul's volitional and intellectual natures. More sees them as merging in a specific ethical and religious sense which he names "the Boniform Faculty of the Soul," and which he declares to be the "seat" of happiness:

moral character was indispensable for any proper understanding of ethics, but was in doubt as to whether character in any way influenced scientific and metaphysical studies.

¹⁰⁴ *Myst. G.*, II.xii.4.

It must be agreed, that the Desires of the Soul fly not to their Object, as it is intelligible, but as it is good or congruous, or grateful, or at least tending to these ends; and so filling the mind with all the Joys and Pleasure it can comprehend. Hence it is plain, that supreme Happiness is not barely to be placed in the Intellect; but her proper Seat must be called the Boniform Faculty of the Soul: namely, a Faculty of that divine Composition and supernatural Texture, as enables us to distinguish not only¹⁰⁵ what is simply and absolutely the best, but to relish it, and to have pleasure in that alone.¹⁰⁶

The "boniform faculty" is to be identified with neither the will—which can be directed toward evil—nor the intellect, which, in itself, belongs to no moral category. It is a specifically ethical sense, perceiving and desiring absolute good, and in no way coextensive with the will, the intellect, or both. But it *does* partake of both, and, while More seems to emphasize the volitional phase, his "boniform faculty" very definitely includes an intellectual element. It is meant to represent a faculty apprehending, through man's cognitive and conative powers, the highest good. In the words of W. C. De Pauley, More "is thinking of a perfect alliance between a cleansed intellect and a cleansed will."¹⁰⁷ The word "meant" is used advisedly. The account More gives of the "boniform faculty" is not fully consistent. At times, the intellectual aspect fades into the background, and More appears to verge upon the concept of a "moral sense" which later became so dominant in eighteenth-century ethics. He may say, for instance, that absolute good is "judged of by Right Reason: but that the relish and delectation thereof, is to be taken in by the Boniform Faculty,"¹⁰⁸ or that "the sweetness and delight" of "somewhat which of its own nature is simply good" "is relished by the Boniform Faculty."¹⁰⁹ As regards the relation of the "boniform faculty" to "right reason," furthermore, there appears, *prima facie*, to be both confusion and contradiction.¹¹⁰ At bottom, how-

¹⁰⁵ The translation is slightly confusing here; what is really meant is "not only to distinguish . . . but to relish." More's original Latin reads: "in ea facultate qua sapimus id quod simpliciter et absolute optimum est, eoque unice gaudemus."

¹⁰⁶ *Ench. Eth.*, I.ii.5.

¹⁰⁷ *The Candle of the Lord* (London, 1937), p. 142.

¹⁰⁸ *Ench. Eth.*, I.v.1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ench. Eth.*, I.v.7.

¹¹⁰ See Grace N. Dolson, "The Ethical System of Henry More," *Philos. Rev.* 6 (1897), 600-601. Somewhat less satisfactory is Eugene M. Austin, *The Ethics of the Cambridge Platonists* (Philadelphia, 1935), pp. 38-42.

ever, the conception retains its intellectual element. One must agree with W. R. Sorley, who, after assigning to More "a place among the beginners of the intellectualist tradition in English ethics," goes on to dissociate the "boniform faculty" from mere sensibility:

He [i.e., More] has also been regarded as having anticipated the "moral sense" school by his doctrine of the "boniform faculty." In some respects this is his most characteristic contribution to ethics; but his expressions are misunderstood if held to imply that the boniform faculty is allied to sensibility rather than to intellect . . . it is not, like sense, inferior to intellect and its provider with material. Rather, is it super-intellectual.¹¹¹

The last statement, however, cannot stand unqualified. The "boniform faculty" is, to be sure, above the ratiocinative intellect as that is normally conceived. But its *function* is, in part, an intellectual one, and it may therefore be said to include an aspect of intellect raised to a higher degree.

The "boniform faculty" is clearly akin to a conception of intellectual love, and hence we are hardly surprised to find More associating them. "And what," he asks,

is all this Intellectual Love, we so describe, but an inward Life and Sense, that moves in the Boniform Faculty of the Soul? 'Tis by this the Soul relisheth what is simply the best; thither it tends, and in that alone it has its Joy and Triumph. Hence we are instructed how to set God before our Eyes; to love him above all; to adhere to him as the supremest Good; to consider him as the Perfection of all Reason, of all Beauty, of all Love; how all was made by his Power, and that all is upheld by his Providence. Hence also is the Soul taught how to affect and admire the Creation, and all the Parcels of it; as they share in that Divine Perfection and Beneficence.¹¹²

This "Intellectual Love" More considered the highest of the virtues—at once their apex and their source. It is even the criterion of "right reason"; "nothing," he declares, "should pass, or be accounted, for Right Reason, which from this Divine Source and Fountain did not take its Birth . . . Therefore I say, this most simple and Divine Sense and Feeling in the Boniform Faculty of the Soul, is that Rule or Boundary, whereby Reason is ex-

¹¹¹ W. R. Sorley, *A History of English Philosophy* (New York, 1921), p. 121.

¹¹² *Ench. Eth.*, II.ix.15.

amin'd and approves her self." ¹¹³ But it can enjoy this exalted status only because it is itself not so much an emotion as a state, a quality of the soul:

Yet when all is said, perhaps this Love, which we insist upon, may not so truly be term'd a Passion, as acknowledg'd to be the Peace and Tranquillity of the Mind: ¹¹⁴ nay a state of such Serenity, as hath no other Motions than those of benignity and Beneficence. So that this Love may rather be thought a firm and unshaken Benignity, or Bounty of the Soul; such as has nothing more perfect, or more approaching to the immortal Gods. ¹¹⁵

With those final words, More reminds us once again of the central axis of his thought. "Amor intellectualis" represents man's noblest attainment because, as a rational harmony of his whole being, it brings him closest to deiformity; and it finds its fullest expression when directed to its highest—to its proper—object, when it is manifested as an *amor Dei intellectualis*.

IV

In the light of More's view of the intellect and the will, we may consider the more specific problem of the relations of faith and reason. In the broadest sense, these relations are the subject of this whole chapter, indeed of this entire book. In a narrower sense, however, we may now apply ourselves to studying their direct reciprocal effects upon each other and their respective positions vis-à-vis one another. That faith and reason are conjoined, More, like all the Cambridge Platonists, considered axiomatic. Their union occurs upon two levels. On the absolute plane, or, to use the seventeenth-century term, with respect to "reason in things," they have a common basis because they derive from a common source. Issuing from a rational God, the verities of faith are themselves intrinsically rational. The conception of a "double truth," pushed to its extreme by late medieval Averroists, ¹¹⁶ must be rejected; "there is a perpetual peace

¹¹³ *Ench. Eth.*, II.ix.14.

¹¹⁴ In seventeenth-century usage, the word "mind" is not as closely identified with the intellect as it often is in modern usage, but is more inclusive. More's corresponding Latin term is "anima."

¹¹⁵ *Ench. Eth.*, II.ix.18.

¹¹⁶ See Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1938), pp. 54-65.

and agreement betwixt Truth and Truth, be they of what nature or kind so ever.”¹¹⁷ This “peace and agreement” exists likewise on the relative human level, with respect to “reason in us.” It is here, of course, that the seventeenth-century battle lines were drawn, and one must tread warily. In attempting to assess More’s position one is further handicapped by the fact that his discussions of the problem—usually incidental—are, on numerous points, ambiguous. But the outlines of his fundamental viewpoint are clearly defined, and we may sketch them briefly.

More holds, first of all, that the objective content of faith can never run counter to human reason. Tertullian’s *credo quia impossibile*, which Sir Thomas Browne hailed so enthusiastically, More—no less sharply than Locke—rejects unequivocally:

That of that witty Father of the Church, *Credo quia impossibile*, that is, “I believe because ’tis impossible,” however it might please the Answerer, it could never satisfie the Opposer . . . He that will acknowledge Impossibilities in Religion, gives up the Cause without Blows, and yields at once all that his Adversary denied, namely, that his Religion is nothing but a Forgery or Foolery.¹¹⁸

One of the characteristics of the “Mystery of Godliness,” More consequently declared to be its “intelligibility”; not the only characteristic, to be sure—it is, after all, a mystery—but nevertheless a definitive attribute. Secondly, More holds that the subjective act—or state—of faith is thoroughly rational. More is hardly touched by *angst*; and Kierkegaard’s conception of faith as absurd and nonsensical he would have considered sheer gibberish. What more consonant to the “Deiform intellect,” what more natural to the rational soul, than perfect faith? As the respective sovereigns in the integrated realms of grace and nature, faith and reason are inextricably intertwined.¹¹⁹ The fully

¹¹⁷ *The Apology of Dr. Henry More* (London, 1664), i.3.

¹¹⁸ *Myst. G.*, IX.iii.1.

¹¹⁹ The character of the respective orders of grace and nature and the relevance of their relations to the problem of faith and reason has been most fully discussed by A. S. P. Woodhouse. See his solid and illuminating introduction to *Puritanism and Liberty*, 2nd ed. (London, 1950); “The Argument of Milton’s *Comus*,” *Univ. of Toronto Quart.* 11 (1941), 47–49; “Nature and Grace in *The Faerie Queene*,” *ELH* 16 (1949), 194–198; and “Spenser, Nature, and Grace: Mr. Gang’s Mode of Argument Reviewed,” *ELH* 27 (1960), 1–10. Woodhouse’s studies are perhaps especially relevant to Cam-

regenerate soul is animated and guided by both. The objection that "if Regeneration imply a real new Generation, that then it must also imply a real Corruption; so that the Natural Soul shall be destroyed, or at least Natural Knowledge, Natural Principles of Reason," More rejects categorically. In the tradition of religious humanism, More—no less than Hooker or Aquinas—insists that the true regeneration of grace does not uproot the natural but rather builds upon it: "Not a jot of this follows. Neither the Soul it self, nor its Natural Principles of Knowledge or Reason are destroyed or abated, but made up and perfected . . . Doth the Soul of man coming into the organiz'd Body, destroy the Body? Or doth it not rather perfect and compleat it? So doth also the Spirit of God coming into the Soul."¹²⁰

Not that More treats faith as a simply intellectual phenomenon. Far from it; for More is principally concerned with faith, not belief. Belief? Why, the very devils, as More told Thomas Vaughan, "the devils also believe."¹²¹ Belief could be a tag tied

bridge Platonism, in view of his own acknowledgment (*Puritanism and Liberty*, introd., p. 84 and n.) that his principal contentions had been partially anticipated by Cassirer's *Die Platonische Renaissance in England und die Schule von Cambridge*.

¹²⁰ *Discourses*, pp. 409–410.

¹²¹ *The Second Lash of Alazonomastix*, 2nd ed., publ. with *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (London, 1656), p. 237. The tract is one of a number exchanged in a running debate between More and Vaughan. In 1650, the latter, a Rosicrucian and a disciple of Robert Fludd (and, incidentally, the twin brother of Henry Vaughan, the poet), published two mystico-magical treatises, *Anthroposophia Theomagica* and *Anima Magica Abscondita*, whose contents seemed to More to represent a perversion of true philosophic theosophy, but whose views resembled his sufficiently to give him concern lest readers fail to distinguish between the two and take his position and Vaughan's to be identical. Consequently, More wrote his critical *Observations upon Anthroposophia Theomagica and Anima Magica Abscondita*; and as Vaughan had written under the pseudonym of "Eugenius Philalethes," More replied as "Alazonomastix Philalethes." Vaughan rebutted with *The Man Mouse Taken in a Trap* (1650), and More came back with *The Second Lash of Alazonomastix* (1651). Vaughan then fired the final volley in *The Moor scour'd again* (1651), and More declined to continue the controversy, which had opened on a note of sportful raillery, but had soon descended to billingsgate and scurrility, in which More was not quite his opponent's match. For details, see A. E. Waite, ed. *The Works of Thomas Vaughan: Eugenius Philalethes* (London, 1919), pp. 468–473, and George Armour Craig, "Umbra Dei: Henry More and the Seventeenth Century Struggle for Plainness" (unpubl. doctoral diss., Harvard, 1947), pp. 116–126.

to the kite of human reason, almost as an afterthought. More recognizes, together with Cudworth, that "Scripture faith is not a mere believing of historical things, and upon artificial arguments or testimonies only, but a certain higher and diviner power in the soul that peculiarly correspondeth with the Deity."¹²² Faith is a vital inner power, charging the soul in its totality, transmuting the whole complex of human personality. Far from consisting in the mere acceptance of a certain conceptual *datum*, it is rooted in experience, its essence being a sense of trust, dependence, and consequently obedience. The essence of faith lies in the desire "to take our rest entirely in the will and Spirit of God";¹²³ and, much in Schleiermacher's vein, More writes of "inuring ourselves to fayth in God and dependence on and full submission to him."¹²⁴ It is this faith, "an Obediential Faith and Affiance in the true God, the Maker and Original of all things,"¹²⁵ which More could designate the "Root of this Divine Life." Such faith is particularly a reliance upon the divine assistance for the destruction of sin, combined with a sincere desire for its eradication. More defines it as "Faith . . . in the Power of God and in the assistance of his Spirit, to enable us to extirpate and mortifie all our Corruptions to an happy Resurrection to Life and Righteousness,"¹²⁶ and he has Philotheus explain its implications:

I drive at an absolute Sincerity by this Doctrine, O Sophron, that a Man should not allow himself in any known Wickedness whatsoever, but keep an upright Conscience before God, and before Men: Forasmuch as his own Conscience tells him by virtue of this Doctrine, that if he be not wanting to himself, God is both able and willing, by the Assistance of his Spirit, to free him from all his Corruptions.¹²⁷

The same note is struck in one of the *Discourses*, in which More describes the equipment necessary "for a prosperous Journey toward the House of God." The first item is knowledge of the

¹²² Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London, 1845), I.xlv.

¹²³ February 2, 1666/7, *Con. L.*, p. 281.

¹²⁴ November 29, 1658, *Con. L.*, p. 154.

¹²⁵ *Myst. G.*, II.xii.1.

¹²⁶ *Div. Dia.*, p. 505.

¹²⁷ *Div. Dia.*, p. 503.

principles of good and evil. "The next is Faith: By which," More continues, "I do not so much understand Faith in general, as that which has for its proper Object the Power of God for the destroying of Sin, and the erecting his Kingdom in us." Finally, "the third and last Requisite" is, once again

Sincerity; which comprehends not only a belief that all our Sins ought to be subdued, and that they are all vanquishable through the assistance of Gods Spirit, but also an unfeigned willingness to have them subdued, and an hearty endeavour, to the utmost of that power we have received, to conquer them and subdue them.¹²⁸

A faith which is here virtually subsumed under sincerity is obviously far removed from any mere conceptual acceptance of specific religious formulae.

In this sense, faith is clearly an act of the will,¹²⁹ and we thus

¹²⁸ *Discourses*, pp. 41-43.

¹²⁹ Whether faith is indeed an act of the will or of the intellect, is a long-standing question, one which was under discussion during the middle of the seventeenth century. Among others, Laud (*Conference with Fisher*, in *Works* [London, 1849], II, 119) speaks of it as "a mixed act of the will and the understanding" but sees the former as predominant. Meric Casaubon (*Of Credulity and Incredulity* [London, 1670], pp. 149-150) mentions the question as a subject of current interest but declines to go into it. Isaac Barrow ("Of the Virtue and Reasonableness of Faith," in *Theological Works*, ed. Alexander Napier [Oxford, 1859], V, 36-82) sees it as essentially an act of the intellect. He is thus naturally disturbed by the problem that if "a doctrine be propounded with evident and cogent reason, what virtue is there in believing it . . . ? If it be propounded without such reason, what fault can it be to refuse assent" (V, 38)? He goes on to solve it as the Cartesians solved the problem of free will—the content of faith forces assent, once apprehended, but the virtue of faith consists in the will's decision to pay attention to that content and study its implications honestly.

Basically, the whole question turns (as Coleridge so clearly perceived) on whether one sees faith as "belief"—certainly related to the intellect—or distinguishes it as an experiential phenomenon, related to the will. Thus, Pearson—in his *Exposition of the Creed*, 9th ed. (London, 1710)—declares that "faith is an habit of the intellectual part of man" (p. 12), and then goes on to use the terms faith and belief indiscriminately. Barrow obviously has the former in mind; hence, the will merely decides to *attend* to the truths of "faith." To Laud, faith is still essentially belief, but, much in James's manner, he sees the will as actually deciding to believe, not simply to study beliefs—"and the will inclines the understanding to yield full approbation to that whereof it sees not full proof" (II, 119). Still a third attitude would see "faith" as an immediate experience, leading derivatively to belief. Cf. Pico's 44th Proposition: "Sicut fides, quae est credulitas, est infra intellectum; ita fides, quae est vere fides, est supersubstantialiter supra

find ourselves once more considering the relations of the will and the intellect. And again, while More recognizes the authority of reason, he insists that it can be validly exercised only through a reason which has been irradiated and informed by the vital experience—or, better said, the state—of faith. As *energy* (*energeia*), faith is concomitant with regeneration; and with the rebirth of the total personality, comes the renascence of the intellect as well. A reason which does not result from the vital experience of faith “is but a dead *skiagraphia* or umbratile Imagination, a faint and ineffectual thing, evanid, fugitive and flitting.”¹³⁰ But when faith leads to a “Self-deadness” succeeded by a “spiritual Resurrection,” then there is true knowledge: “Wherefore he that is arrived to this Substantiality of life will be fixt in all useful Divine Truths, and the Reasons that grow on such a Root will be found solid and permanent by him that has the Root.”¹³¹ To More, faith and reason are not, as they were often familiarly represented, two distinctly independent lights.¹³² There is rather a constant interplay of one and the other. Faith and reason are not, as in Donne, a right and a left hand; they are intermeshing roots entwined around the seed of the deiform soul, grounded in its very essence. Speaking of the period following More’s early religious struggles, a German scholar has described his subsequent development very aptly:

Für die weitere Entwicklung Mores ist es dann charakteristisch, dass diese rationalistische Konzeption immer mehr durch die Mystische verdrängt wird. Das resultat ist nicht ein gleichberechtigtes Nebeneinander von Erkennen und Glauben wie bei den Oxford Theologen, sondern eher ein fliessendes Hintereinander von Erkenntnis und Intuition.¹³³

scientiam et intellectum, nos Deo immediate conjugens.” (Quoted in Thomas Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists*, 2nd ed. [Cambridge, Eng., 1928], p. 163 n.). Cf. also Norris, *Conduct of Life*, p. 52.

¹³⁰ *Div. Dia.*, p. 293.

¹³¹ *Div. Dia.*, pp. 294–295.

¹³² Among the Cambridge Platonists, Culverwel tended to see faith and reason as two equally valid but disconnected guides. Smith is very close to More’s view. Whichcote emphasized the need for purity of the will for faith, but the positive experiential aspect was not too much stressed by him.

¹³³ Paul Meissner, “Die rationalistische Grundlage der englischen Kultur des 17. Jahrhunderts,” *Anglia* 55 (1931), 345.

To the term "mystische" I would once again take exception, but the essential point is clear. In the words of De Pauley, More holds "that reason and faith interpenetrate."¹³⁴ This interpenetration is, again, twofold. It is manifested, first, in the exercise of faith and reason, in the act of assuming faith or employing reason, in "Erkennen und Glauben." For we remember that the harmony of the intellect and the will is not, for More, simply the peace of friendly neighbors. It is the union of a loving couple, each participating in the other's activity. The union of faith and reason is evident, secondly, in the result of their joint function, a function that enriches both. Through their interanimation, reason itself may partake of a religious quality, and it is this regenerate reason that More sets up as the ultimate religious authority. Noteworthy is a passage from the second canto of *Psychozoia*, in which the question of the basis of religious certitude is raised. When one of the speakers asks whether it be reason or unreasonableness, Mnenon replies that "There is a third ycleep'd Gods spright/Nor reason nor unreasonableness hight."¹³⁵ And he goes on to describe its character fully. It is a

Sense upon which holy Intelligence
And heavenly Reason and comely Prudence
(O beauteous branches of that root divine!)
Do springen up, through inly experience
Of Gods hid wayes, as he doth ope the ey'n
Of our dark souls and in our hearts his light enshrine.¹³⁶

Impregnated by faith, reason becomes "the Spirit of Life in the new Birth, which is a discerning Spirit, and makes a Man of 'a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord' (Psa. 11:2-3),"¹³⁷ and its voice, consequently, a trustworthy guide.

More's position is perhaps most concretely manifested in his attitude toward "enthusiasm." In his own day, More was hailed as one of its leading opponents.¹³⁸ The modern reader will hardly

¹³⁴ *Candle of the Lord*, p. 131.

¹³⁵ *Psychozoia*, ii.90.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, ii.99.

¹³⁷ *Div. Dia.*, p. 495.

¹³⁸ More's writings on enthusiasm are, to say the least, extensive. "I could speak of this Theme in *Infinitem*," he declared in a letter appended to Ward's *Life*, p. 352, and he almost did. The most important passages are to be found in *Second Lash*, pp. 161, 175-185, 282-287, and the appended "Mastix his Letter to a Private Friend," pp. 289-319; *Conj. Cab.*, "Preface,"

consider this signal praise; in any event, the opposition will appear quite puzzling. He should rather have expected a poet to be an exponent of "enthusiasm." Indeed, he finds it strange that anyone at all should be opposed to "enthusiasm," a quality we admire, equally and universally, in the scholar, the politician, or the ballplayer. And yet, for approximately a century—from the middle of the seventeenth¹³⁹ to the middle of the eighteenth century—the term was one of general opprobrium, particularly among the "cultured" classes. It was equally disdained by the pulpit and the coffee house; the epithet "enthusiast" could be effectively used to denigrate an opponent in both theological polemic and Grub Street satire. The opposition, furthermore, moved on higher levels as well, finding expression in the leading thinkers of the age. Swift, Locke, Shaftesbury, Addison, Hume¹⁴⁰

sec. 3; "Defence," iii.24, and conclusion, pp. 236–242; *Enth. Tri.*, passim; *Myst. G.*, I.v.6; III.ix.5; V.viii,xvii; VI.iii,xii–xviii; VIII.xii; X.xiii; *Div. Dia.*, pp. 88, 217–218, 459–470, 512, and especially "Scholia," pp. 565–575; *Con. L.*, pp. 306–308, 341, 384–426; "Select Letters" in *Ward, Life*, pp. 247, 311–353. More's attitude towards the enthusiasts, particularly the Quakers, is discussed in M. H. Nicolson, "George Keith and the Cambridge Platonists," *Philos. Rev.* 39 (1930), 36–55, and *Con. L.*, pp. 379–451; F. J. Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists* (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), pp. 165–173; and in the more general studies cited in the bibliographical essay. See also J. I. Cope, "The Cupri-Cosmits': Glanvill on Latitudinarian Anti-Enthusiasm," *HLQ* 17 (1954), 267–286, and Joseph Glanvill, "The Usefulness of Real Philosophy to Religion," in *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion* (London, 1676), pp. 24–28.

¹³⁹ Scattered attacks upon "enthusiasm" were already made in the 1620's—e.g., by Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. A. R. Shilleto (London, 1893), III, 391–397, 3.4.1.2—but opposition did not become widespread until the 1650's, partially, no doubt, in reaction against some of the wilder sects of the Commonwealth era. The most extensive treatments of the subject were those of More and of Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme* (London, 1655).

¹⁴⁰ See Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, especially the great "Section IX," and *A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, both in *A Tale of a Tub* etc., ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. N. Smith, 2nd ed. (London, 1958); Locke, *Essay*, IV.xix; A. A. Cooper, "A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm," in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, etc.* (London, 1900), I, 5–39. (In *The Moralists*, however, Shaftesbury seems to take a more sympathetic view. He still speaks "of that savage air of the vulgar enthusiastic kind," but he also recognizes a "serene, soft, and harmonious" enthusiasm which he distinguishes from the former type and goes on to praise fully [*Characteristics*, II, 24–25]); Joseph Addison, "Devotion-Enthusiasm," *Spectator*, no. 201, October 20, 1711, in *Works*, ed. H. G.

—all join in a chorus of denunciation. But the opposition may be understood. In part, to be sure, it was due to the restrained temper of the Augustans, their emphasis upon moderation. The main basis, however—as regards More and numerous others, almost the sole basis—is to be found elsewhere. It is simply a question of semantics. For during its century of censure, the term “enthusiasm” generally bore a special sense. Defined by More at one end as “a misconceit of being inspired,”¹⁴¹ and by Dr. Johnson at the other as “a vain belief of private revelation; a vain confidence of divine favour or communication,”¹⁴² “enthusiasm” was equated with the tendency—so rife among seventeenth-century sectarians—to regard oneself as a special confidant of the Deity—if not, indeed, almost as the Deity proper. The “enthusiast” was one who considered himself the recipient of direct personal revelations, one who, as Theophilus Evans put it, was possessed of “a full but erroneous belief and persuasion that whatever one does act, or speak, or think is from divine inspiration.”¹⁴³ Furthermore—and this is what aroused much of the opposition—the enthusiast applied this “erroneous belief” to practice, to “whatever one does act”; disregarding “ordinary” law, human or divine, he posited—or was seen as positing—his own private revelations as a sufficient guide to conduct.

And it was with such that More took up the cudgels. If it be true “enthusiasm”—religious ardor, passionate fervor, the engagement of one’s whole emotional nature in the direct and personal quest for God—why, then, More is as “enthusiastic” as any. “Not one word,” he declares near the conclusion of *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, has

all this time been spoken against that true and warrantable Enthusiasm of devout and holy Souls, who are so strangely transported in that vehement Love they bear towards God, and that unexpressible Joy

Bohn (London, 1893), III, 70–73; and David Hume, “Of Superstition and Enthusiasm,” in *Philosophical Works* (Boston, 1854), III, 77–85.

¹⁴¹ *Enth. Tri.*, sec. 2.

¹⁴² Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed. (London, 1827), s.v. “enthusiasm.” Johnson gives two other meanings as well, but this is the first, and apparently the primary.

¹⁴³ *History of Modern Enthusiasm* (London, 1752), p. 5. Quoted in E. C. Mossner, *Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason* (New York, 1936), p. 14.

and Peace they find in him . . . To such Enthusiasm as this, which is but the triumph of the Soul of man inebriated, as it were, with the delicious sense of the divine life, that blessed Root and Original of all holy wisdom and virtue, I must declare my self as much a friend, as I am to the vulgar fanatical Enthusiasm a professed enemy.¹⁴⁴

And in a scholium, More goes on to denounce those "who so indulge a sort of dry and hungry Reason, as wholly to exclude all manner of Enthusiasm." Not for him is "this dry reason stript of all affection."¹⁴⁵ More fully realizes the importance of the emotional and the experiential aspects of religious life. From them, after all, derives his emphasis upon the personal element, upon the "inwardness" and spirituality of religion, to be found not in mere external forms, but woven into the very fabric of the soul, as rooted in its deiform ground. The personal, however, is not to be confused with the subjective; and here More and his "enthusiastic" opponents must part company. The light which is to illuminate the paths of the religious life must no doubt be an inner one, a candle of the Lord searching the caverns of the intestinal soul, but its rays, though *seen* individually, shine for one as for all and for all as for one. The "inner voice" must be that of universal reason, its dictates those of objective truth. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? For the "inner light" is a valid guide only insofar as it is "of the Lord," which to More meant, only insofar as it corresponds to an Archetype of rational goodness and beneficent wisdom rooted in eternal and immutable absolutes; corresponds, that is, to the soul's very source. Must not the soul's inner message, likewise, be eternal and immutable, possessing universal validity?

More's emphasis upon introspection should not mislead us into identifying his position with the superficially similar views of Quaker or other contemporaries. A number of scholars have indeed moved in this direction.¹⁴⁶ Concentrating upon More's affinities with Quakerism, they have intimated that—as Blake said of Milton—More was virtually an unwitting member of the presumed opposition. And, as a matter of fact, contemporaries

¹⁴⁴ *Enth. Tri.*, sec. 63.

¹⁴⁵ July 14, 1671, *Con. L.*, p. 340.

¹⁴⁶ See, e.g., Powicke, *Cambridge Platonists*, pp. 165–173, and especially, *Con. L.*, pp. 378–381.

also noted the kinship. Keith is reported to have declared that reading More's *Mystery of Godliness* had turned him Quaker, and More even heard of a rumor that he himself had turned Quaker.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the position taken by an eighteenth-century Quaker apologist—that More was “really and essentially a Quaker”¹⁴⁸—is hardly justified. To the Quakers, the “inner light” received its guidance from immediate fresh subjective revelations; More saw its vision as deriving rather from its own nature, as a facet of the deiform soul. Hence, its voice is that of universal reason—perceived, to be sure, in a personal experience—and its dictates correspond to those of objective truth. It represents, furthermore, a perfection of man's moral and rational nature. In the early Quakers, on the other hand, it is seen as a unique faculty, discontinuous with man's ordinary nature. Barclay went to great lengths to dissociate the “inner light” from both reason and conscience.¹⁴⁹ More wrote of “the Light within me, that is, my Reason and Conscience.”¹⁵⁰ Due to his Calvinistic orientation, the emphasis upon the special and discontinuous character of the “inner light” may be stronger in Barclay than in fellow Quakers. But, in essence, it is present in almost all, and in any event, it was Barclay who formulated the Quaker position most fully. The distinction between More's position and the Quakers' is indeed fundamental; and one might cite both historians of Quakerism and of Arminianism as, each from his own point of view, taking note of it. “In actual fact,” writes Geoffrey Nuttall, “there is, again, an utter difference of spiritual

¹⁴⁷ More mentions Keith's report in a letter to Lady Conway (July 14, 1671, *Con. L.*, p. 341). See also Mullinger, *Cambridge Characteristics in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1867), pp. 151–153, and *Con. L.*, pp. 424–425.

¹⁴⁸ Britannicus [pseud.], “A Vindication of the Quakers,” in *Another Cordial for Low-Spirits*, ed. T. Gordon (London, 1751), II, 248.

¹⁴⁹ See Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity, Being an Explanation and Vindication of the Principles and Doctrines of the People Called Quakers* (Philadelphia, n.d.), pp. 142–148, V–VI, secs. 15–18. See also the very perceptive article by Brand Blanshard, “Early Thought on the Inner Light,” in *Byways in Quaker History*, ed. Howard H. Brinton (Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pa., 1944), pp. 153–178. Much fuller but rather confusedly disorganized is Leif Eeg-Olofsson, *The Conception of the Inner Light in Robert Barclay's Theology*, trans. C. M. Evans (Lund, 1954).

¹⁵⁰ *Myst. G.*, X.xiii.7.

climate between the rationalist Cambridge men's Logos theology and the theology of the Holy Spirit which the untutored Quakers worked out in their own experience";¹⁵¹ while A. W. Harrison, for his part, declares that "it was a characteristic of this school [the Cambridge Platonists], which seemed to differentiate them from the early Quakers, that they believed in the inner light, but found it identical with the purified reason of man."¹⁵² Nor is the distinction incidental. The very fact that More fully recognized his affinities with the "enthusiasts" and yet fought them with such persistent vigor should lead us to pay closer attention to their differences. There is no reason to assume he was self-deceived.

In More's "inner light," the "Gods spright" which he establishes as the final religious authority, is reflected, then, the interpenetration of faith and reason. The appeal to a vital inward experiential force is ultimately one with the appeal to reason. For it is, of course, a reason charged with the vital power of faith, regenerated in the religious renaissance of the soul, of which More speaks. And we may note, finally, another result of their interanimation. While on the one hand, faith is the nourisher and sustenant of reason, it is, on the other hand, its beneficiary. For the truths of faith are themselves in turn understood and interpreted by the "illuminated reason." Both aspects of the relation are clearly expressed in a passage found in the first of the controversial tracts More wrote against Vaughan: "But questionless the Scripture is the beginner, nourisher and emprover of that life and light which is better then all the Philosophy in the world. And he that stands in this light, the firmer and fuller he is possessed of it, he is the more able to judge both of Nature, Reason, and Scripture it self."¹⁵³ As an instrument of faith, Scripture (whose own validity is, of course, beyond question) kindles the revitalizing spark which then enables the faithful to inquire into itself and thus to transcend it—or rather, to rediscover it on another plane. The passage is all the more instructive in that it does not deal with

¹⁵¹ *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1947), p. 18.

¹⁵² "Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist," *London Quart. and Holborn Rev.* 158 (1933), 487.

¹⁵³ *Observations*, p. 121.

faith in the abstract but with Scripture, seen here as being at once the nourisher of a rational faith and its object. When "Nature, Reason, and Scripture it self" are apprehended by a judgment informed by the power and the *datum* of faith, the union of *vera fides* and *recta ratio* has come full circle.

More's central position thus emerges as one of integration. Faith and reason, and, on a larger scale, the intellect and the will, are seen in perfect harmony. This unity is, for More, an ideal in itself. In *Psychozoia*, "Dizoie (that is, the dual life)" is an allegorical land of evil, and the concluding line of the poem reads—"The Good is uniform, the Evil infinite."¹⁵⁴ A brief Latin poem is significantly titled "Monocardia," and it includes a rapturous apostrophe to "Pulchra O Simplicitas! beata virgo!"¹⁵⁵ Indeed, one might fully agree with A. W. Harrison that, in More's poetry, "the whole problem of being is to pass from diversity to unity."¹⁵⁶ Nor need we be surprised. For the concern with unity, both on the metaphysical and the psychological levels, has marked the whole history of Platonism. One of the most famous passages in the *Enneads* is concerned with the attainment of "inner unity," and in expressing this ideal More renders his debt to Neoplatonism explicit—"That precept of the Pythagoreans, *haploson seauton*, 'Simplify your self, Reduce your self to One,' how wise, how holy, how true is it? What a sure Foundation is it of life, liberty, and easy sagacity, in things belonging to Virtue, Religion, and Justice?"¹⁵⁷ He envisions a single-minded dedication of man's whole nature, the consecration of all his faculties fused in harmonious union, for the fulfillment of what is at once God's will and man's destiny. Every significant aspect of human personality must be included. Thus, More argues for the essential goodness of the passions, "concerning all which we must maintain it against the Stoicks, that of their own Nature they are good."¹⁵⁸ And elsewhere, he embraces not only the passions, but the animal life in its entirety. Throughout the

¹⁵⁴ *Psychozoia*, iii.71.

¹⁵⁵ *Poems*, p. 180.

¹⁵⁶ *London Quart. and Holborn Rev.* 158 (1933), 491.

¹⁵⁷ "Defence," i.18. The "Pythagoreans" of course came to More through the Neoplatonists.

¹⁵⁸ *Ench. Eth.*, I.vi.2.

Conjectura Cabbalistica, he urges repeatedly that natural good is to be neither eradicated nor deprecated, but properly directed—"nor is the Animal Life quite to be starved and pined, but regulated and kept in subjection." Or again, "the true Divine Life would destroy nothing that is in Nature, but only regulate things, and order them for the more full and sincere enjoyment of man . . . Wherefore the Passions of the Body are not to be quite extinguished, but regulated, that there may be the greater plenitude of life in the whole man."¹⁵⁹

More's insistence upon "the greater plenitude of life in the whole man" leads him to accept not only "the Passions of the Body" but the body itself. He sees a "Divine Body" as a constituent element of the "Divine Life."¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, on the universal plane, the emphasis upon unity is reflected in the rejection of any form of cosmic dualism. More's acceptance of natural good thus extended to the physical world proper. Far from viewing it as Augustine's *massa perditionis*, he approached the attitude so boldly exemplified by Francis of Assisi. Ward declares that "he embraced with the Arms of the Highest Love and Affection the entire Universe," and he quotes More's own statement that "a good Man could be sometimes ready, in his own private Reflections, to kiss the very stones of the street."¹⁶¹ Clearly,

¹⁵⁹ "The Moral Cabbala," i.30 and "Defence," i.31. The "Animal Life" which More defends here is of course not to be confused with that which he attacks in his *Myst. G.*, II.ix. In the later work, More is speaking of a life which is animal in its totality, and the term "animal" has a moral connotation, referring to a life rooted in self-love. In *Conj. Cab.*, however, More refers to "the Animal Life" as one aspect of man's total existence, an existence rooted, of course, in moral and religious values. The term "animal" here has only a biological connotation. More's defense of the "animal life" was referred to by Norris who, in his *Theory and Regulation of Love*, p. 84, specifically applied it to sexual passion. And interestingly enough, we find the subject discussed at length in the *Norris-More Corr.*, pp. 137-152, 160-165, 174-175, and 188-190.

¹⁶⁰ See *Div. Dia.*, pp. 293-295, and "Preface General," sec. 6, in *Philosophical Writings*.

¹⁶¹ *Life*, pp. 83-84 and 56, respectively. More's love of nature was pointed out by Tulloch (*Rational Theology*, II, 349), but his assertion that this delight "overstimulated" More, thus leading him to write with insufficient judgment, seems to me to lack foundation. Similarly, De Pauley's statement that More sought God principally via nature and that this fact may serve as "a key to his mind" (*Candle of the Lord*, p. 117), assigns a disproportionate importance to this aspect of his thought. More sought God in nature,

the acceptance of nature—physical as well as human—constituted an integral element of More's unitary vision.

To be sure, More's "world-acceptance" is often counterbalanced by a strong conflicting strain of "other-worldliness." The renunciation and rejection of temporal and natural good—the fervent desire to transcend "this world, this sad theatre of tragick wickedness or fruitless vanity"¹⁶²—is certainly a recurring theme.¹⁶³ At bottom, however, More's basic attitude is one of acceptance. While he has much to say of "Mortification," More generally makes it clear that what is to be mortified is neither man's physical organism nor his natural passions but rather his self-will.¹⁶⁴ And even the effect of truly renunciatory passages may be mitigated somewhat. More is often motivated by the vision of a higher good in comparison with which the natural order—while not positively evil—is nevertheless inferior.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, much of what he rejects is not the world—at least, not the natural world—but worldliness, the inordinate absorption with mundane affairs and the positing of purely secular criteria as the guides and motives of human life.¹⁶⁶ Finally, even if we acknowledge—as we should—that the residual element of clear rejection remains very real in More—it is expressed in passages of unquestionable sincerity and passion—we should recognize that it does not represent his basic position. In his longing for the higher vision, More—like his master, Spenser—often felt a yearning not only to surmount nature but to dispense with it, to see worldly bliss as but a snare and a delusion,

to be sure, but the conception of a divine revelation in nature is by no means the central axis of his thinking—as it is perhaps in Browne or Vaughan. More did go to great lengths in his *Antidote against Atheism* to show how all of nature points to the existence of a divine artifex. This is merely the traditional argument from design, however, and may be advanced *post facto*, after one has already discovered God elsewhere and then seen Him in nature.

¹⁶² November 2, 1651, *Con. L.*, p. 54.

¹⁶³ See, e.g., "The Oracle," in *Poems*, p. 135; *App. Ant. Ath.*, iii.1; *Myst. G.*, V.iii.2, and VI.v.4; *Imm. Soul*, III.xvii.15; *Con. L.*, June 18, 1654, p. 102; or February 16, 1656, p. 130.

¹⁶⁴ See, e.g., *Discourses*, p. 433; "Answer to a Learned Psychopyrist," sec. 34; *Norris-More Corr.*, pp. 158–159; January 16, 1685/6; and "Select Letters," in Ward, *Life*, p. 277.

¹⁶⁵ See, e.g., *Norris-More Corr.*, pp. 161–162; January 16, 1685/6.

¹⁶⁶ See, e.g., *Discourses*, p. 5.

not only insufficient but intrinsically false. But as regards both More and Spenser, I think the fundamental position—certainly the position they formulated consciously—was definitely one of acceptance. Their renunciatory aspect—no doubt nurtured in both by the influence of Platonic idealism and dogmatic Calvinism—expressed itself rather in specific isolated irrepressible comments occasioned by the evil they could not but see and by which they could not but be repelled. More's basic attitude, however, is clearly predicated upon the comprehensive acceptance of both nature and human nature. For the attainment of deiform regeneration must involve the total complex of human personality, on its volitional, intellectual, and even physical sides, all molded into a comprehensive unity.

The place of morality within this religious ideal may be clearly defined. That morality has such a place goes without saying. A moral emphasis pervades all More's thought, and he had occasion to make it explicit in the course of his polemics against the enthusiasts, many of whom he justifiably charged with "that hellish and abominable position," antinomianism.¹⁶⁷ But, of course, More does not envision simply an independent validity for morality. He insists further that it is closely interrelated with religion. He asserts first, that moral conduct is itself an aspect of the religious life—"for even Moral Honesty it self is part of the Law of God, and an adumbration of the Divine Life."¹⁶⁸ Not merely a prerequisite, not only a prelude, but an integral element. And indeed, he could hardly have held otherwise. For More, it will be recalled, insisted emphatically that the Divine Will itself is bound, as it were, by the moral law inherently constituted in its own rational character. The contention "that will rules God, but Good rules not Gods will," he apostrophized as "O belch of hell! O horrid blasphemy!"¹⁶⁹ And obviously, if Good, as its intrinsic moral law, rules "Gods will," and if, as

¹⁶⁷ *Div. Dia.*, p. 222; see also pp. 324-328, and *Myst. G.*, VIII.iv. The spread of immoral practices among numerous sects was a serious problem at the time, especially during the period of the Commonwealth. See Gertrude Huehns, *Antinomianism in English History* (London, 1951) and C. E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism, 1660-1688* (New York, 1931), pp. 267-277.

¹⁶⁸ *Div. Dia.*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ *Psychathanasia*, III.iv.21-22.

More never tired of repeating, the essence of religion consists in being of one will with God, then morality must, *ipso facto*, be included as a facet of religion. Such an attitude is, after all, an inevitable corollary of the concept of deiformity.

Morality is thus an element of religion by its own intrinsic nature, being an assimilation to the Divine Will in which it is constituted—"willed because good." However, it also gains a new dimension of "goodness" insofar as it is "good because willed," insofar as it is an aspect of God's will and His guide for man, and is hence performed out of a religious motive. For More holds, secondly, that morality can attain its own fulfillment, can realize its own true development, only when securely grounded upon a religious basis. Devoid of any religious significance, morality is not only inadequate, but imperfect, not only insufficient, but—even as regards its own purely moral character—incomplete. The "three Branches of the Divine Life, Humility, Charity, and Purity," More declared, must be rooted in faith; else they "may degenerate into a mere accustomed or complexional Frame of Morality,"¹⁷⁰ into what Whichcote said was not morality at all, but "civility." Performed out of a love for God and as an observance of a divine norm, a moral act is one thing, and, performed out of purely secular motives—be they never so idealistic—it is something else entirely. And, More would have added, something decidedly inferior—"Nulla enim solida est, sine hoc Amore Divino, virtus."¹⁷¹ For, as a modern Gifford lecturer put it, "even moral duties, when performed in the temper of religion, undergo a subtle and significant transformation."¹⁷²

Morality thus realizes its own perfection only when it is not a closed system, only when it looks beyond itself for its fulfillment. We have seen this to be true of the content of morality; it must be complemented and indeed transmuted by being placed within a religious framework. But it is also true of the *means* of fulfilling moral virtue. For More holds, thirdly, that the moral man cannot lift himself very far by his own bootstraps, and that he consequently must look to a higher source for aid in the

¹⁷⁰ *Myst. G.*, IX.xii.9.

¹⁷¹ *Enchiridion Ethicum*, 4th ed. (London, 1711), III.iii.15, "Scholia."

¹⁷² W. G. De Burgh, *From Morality to Religion* (London, 1938), p. 33.

attainment of even his purely moral aims. "Wherefore by Morality," More declared, "I understand here divine Morality, such as is ingendred in the Soul by the operation of the holy Spirit, that inward living Principle of all godliness and honesty."¹⁷³ Into the intricacies of the controversy over divine grace and human virtue, or of More's views thereupon, we cannot now enter. Briefly, however, More advances a median position, "this our middle way of Sincerity," asserting that it is in man's power—and it is consequently his responsibility—to submit his will in a sincere desire for obedience. Such sincere submission then induces (in the sense that a current is induced) divine assistance which guides man further and leads him on toward a growth in grace.¹⁷⁴ Our immediate concern is the fact that More advances this position in connection with *both* morality and religion. In the quest for moral virtue, he declares in the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, "God himself vouchsafes, by some Inward Motions, to communicate and deal benignly with us . . . Those who, with Sincere Affections, do even pant and thirst after Virtue, They on the sudden are caught up by 'that Intellectual Spirit, which replenishes every Thing'; They are animated and supported by it, and finally therewith join'd in the strictest association of Love."¹⁷⁵ To be sure, both the contexts and the concepts vary. The divine assistance induced by sincerity in the *Mystery of Godliness* or the *Divine Dialogues* is essentially the conception of grace, and bears a specifically Christian character. The "Intellectual Spirit" of the *Enchiridion* is cited from Marcus Aurelius. And this need hardly surprise us. But the recognition of the role of divine assistance in the quest for even moral virtue, the acknowledgment of a moral "virtus infusa," is another significant link binding morality and religion.

Against this background, the position of practical and especially social morality may be seen in its proper perspective. It may be the immediate object but it is never mistaken for the ultimate objective. The practical aspect of morality is rather an inevitable

¹⁷³ "Defence," i.1. For an excellent modern discussion of this question, see A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist* (London, 1930), I, 211–254.

¹⁷⁴ See *Myst. G.*, X.ix; *Apology*, vii; and *Div. Dia.*, pp. 503–507.

¹⁷⁵ *Ench. Eth.*, III.iii.10.

byproduct of the soul's inner deiform regeneration. Conduct issues *from* this religious renaissance, but it is not mistaken *for* it. A passage from More's account of the "Divine Life" makes the relation perfectly clear:

But in being thus transformed into this Divine Image of Intellectual Love, our Minds are not only raised in holy Devotions towards God, but descend also in very full and free Streams of dearest Affection to our Fellow-Creatures, rejoicing in their Good as if it were our own, and compassionating their Misery as if it were our selves did suffer; and according to our best Judgment and Power ever endeavouring to promote the one, and to remove the other. And this most eminently contains in it whatever good is driven at by Civil Justice or Moral Honesty.¹⁷⁶

The image—one of Plotinus' favorites, incidentally—is significant. It reminds us, first of all, of More's emphasis upon vitalism. Neither the river nor the pool, but the spring—*mayim hayyim*, "living water," the Bible calls it—has captured his imagination. Of more immediate concern, however, is a second characteristic—spontaneity. Constraint—outer or inner—or even reluctance, is characteristic of an imperfect virtue. More's emphasis, like that of his fellow Platonists, is not simply upon well-doing but upon well-being. Goodness must issue from the soul as light from the sun, by inner necessity, as it were. The practical and social aspects of morality are consequently the result of the religious life rather than its essence. The essence remains "being thus transformed into this Divine Image of Intellectual Love"; and does not the spontaneity of virtue itself imitate the Divine Goodness?

In a subsequent chapter of the *Mystery of Godliness*, More applies this conception even more specifically. "True Knowledge . . . that is, holy Experience in the Ways of God," "begets" first temperance and then patience. Recognition of the Divine Aid in achieving purification then leads to "brotherly Kindness, which carries our Affections to those that profess the same Religion with our selves. Which brotherly Kindness arises not only out of this Consideration of Thankfulness toward God, but out of the very Temper and Condition of the Soul thus purified." But the regenerate soul does not remain thus long confined, and, in

¹⁷⁶ *Myst. G.*, II.xii.4.

a passage somewhat remindful of Bergson, More describes its fullest expression and expansion:

In her pure and ardent Speculations of the Godhead and his unlimited Goodness, and also her Observations of the Capacity of the whole Creation of receiving Good both from him and one another, she overflows those narrow Bounds of brotherly Love, and spreads out into that ineffably-ample and transcendently-divine Grace and Virtue, universal Charity, which is the highest Accomplishment the Soul of Man is capable of either in this Life or that which is to come.¹⁷⁷

Whatever the practical manifestations of this "universal Charity," they are clearly ancillary. They are an inevitable byproduct of the soul's purification. For let us not forget that both the process and the state of purgative renaissance entail the renunciation of self-will, and hence lead to a universal sympathy. "When I my self from mine own self do quit," as More wrote in a minor poem, "then an all spreaden love/To the vast Universe my soul doth fit."¹⁷⁸ This selflessness, in turn, is an integral aspect of deiformity; it is realized, More tells us, through man's attaining "to the Participation of the Divine Nature; which is a Simple, Mild, Benign Light, that seeks nothing for it self as self; but doth tenderly and cordially endeavour the Good of All, and rejoiceth in the Good of All."¹⁷⁹ We thus find ourselves once again at the core of More's religious thought.

v

This aspect of More's religious outlook is what I take to be his central position. Its axis is the ideal of deiformity. It sees man's highest aspiration—at once his duty, his destiny, and his felicity—as consisting in an imitation of the great Divine Archetype of a pure goodness directed by pure reason. It acknowledges the validity of both human reason and human will, and furthermore, it recognizes the necessity of employing both in the exercise of the religious life. The quest for the *imago Dei* is a process of regeneration, transforming and transmuting man's nature in its totality. Both facets of the human soul, the volitional and the intellectual, undergo a catharsis, and they do so, furthermore,

¹⁷⁷ *Myst. G.*, VIII.iii.4.

¹⁷⁹ *Second Lash*, p. 280.

¹⁷⁸ "Cupids Conflict," in *Poems*, p. 171.

by impinging one upon the other, and merging not with, but in, each other. A reason, in itself both "dry" and aimless, and a will "which of it self is but a blind Power" are fused, and "that abler soul which thence doth flow" (to adapt a line written in a very different connection) is one in which both attain a meaningful significance. This aspect of More is that which says, "Quid Verum sit, et quid Bonum, quaero, et rogo; et in hoc Omnis sum"; that in which, in the words of a recent critic, "wurde das Denken befeuert und das Fühlen und Wollen durchleuchtet";¹⁸⁰ that which Norris had in mind when he apostrophized More as "thou Intellectual Epicure." It is that which, finally, as Ernst Cassirer put it, "conceives the fundamental power of the intellect itself as the pure power of love; it sees and seeks in the intellect the '*amor dei intellectualis*.'" ¹⁸¹

The fusion of the intellect and the will, of knowledge and experience, which we have encountered in More is by no means his special property; nor is it even confined to Platonists. "Quoi de plus fréquent, en effet, chez nos écrivains," asked Henri Brémond, "que de montrer l'union étroite, indissoluble, essentielle, du coeur et de l'intelligence, de la volonté droite et la raison, dans la recherche de la vérité?" ¹⁸² And surely no one who has read Brémond's great master, Newman, needs to be reminded of the central place which such an integration occupies in his thought.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, it may profitably be pointed out that

¹⁸⁰ Hugo Reimann, *Henry Mores Bedeutung für die Gegenwart* (Basel, 1941), p. 25.

¹⁸¹ *Platonic Renaissance in England*, pp. 126-128. Cassirer goes on to say, "Reason and will are united in Eros." I have chosen to omit any discussion of the principle of Eros. While some of its elements are undoubtedly included in More's outlook, I have preferred not to treat them in the context of the specific doctrine of Eros. I think Cassirer has greatly exaggerated its influence upon the Cambridge Platonists. He has been misled, in part, by the assumption that Ficino's influence was very great in England, and that the Florentines were the fountainhead of English Platonism. The man most qualified to judge has declared that Ficino's influence was *not* very great, being mostly limited to the poetry of love and beauty based on the *Symposium*, which flourished 1570-1610, e.g., Spenser's *Four Hymns*. See Sears Jayne, "Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance," *Comp. Lit.* 4 (1952), 214-238. More, of course, did read Ficino and was influenced by him, but not to the extent indicated by Cassirer.

¹⁸² *L'Inquiétude Religieuse*, 5th ed. (Paris, 1909), p. 103.

¹⁸³ Newman was of course somewhat influenced by Platonism. In his full-

such a fusion is especially characteristic of the best traditions of Platonism. To glance only briefly at the figures which influenced More most, we find at the fountainhead, Plato, himself—perhaps the supreme Western example of the philosopher-poet, in whose writings—and in whose mind and heart—dialectic and myth, rigorous thought and inspired vision, are inextricably interwoven. The next major figure, Plotinus, has been held up by Dean Inge as the great exemplar of an intellectual mysticism which builds through reason and not around it.¹⁸⁴ Turning to Christian Platonists, we may content ourselves with reference to two groups. Among the third-century Alexandrians, Origen especially stands out as an advocate of a gnosis which, as has become increasingly recognized of late, is yet charged with an emotion arising from experience. And he insists that the two elements are inseparable; even the “mystical” life remains contemplative. In the words of a recent student, to Origen, “ainsi, la vie mystique apparaît comme une certaine connaissance expérimentale des choses divines.”¹⁸⁵ Nimble skipping over a millennium, we encounter the same fusion of knowledge and experience—of emotion irradiated by intellection, and reason illuminated by the purified will—in the fifteenth-century Florentines. Pico, for instance, was somewhat influenced by the mystical tradition (which does not necessarily mean he was a mystic), “but,” declared Cassirer,

what distinguishes Pico from many other forms of mysticism is the circumstance that he is and endeavors to remain primarily a theoretical thinker . . . The true *amor Dei* is for Pico *amor intellectualis*: for only to the intellect is there disclosed the truly Universal, which forms a necessary moment and the real mark of the Divine . . . The mystic

length study, C. F. Harrold even stated that “by nature he was ‘Platonic’” (*John Henry Newman* [New York, 1945], p. 132), and, in an earlier article, Harrold discussed the specific influence of Alexandrian Platonism upon him (see “Newman and the Alexandrian Platonists,” *MP* 37 [1940], 279–291). Nevertheless, one does not think of him as being directly within the tradition.

¹⁸⁴ *The Philosophy of Plotinus* (London, 1923), I, 1–7.

¹⁸⁵ Jean Daniélou, *Origène* (Paris, 1948), p. 299. Cf. the statement of Camelot (*Foi et Gnose*, p. 58) with respect to Clement. “Sa pensée est à la fois toute rationnelle et toute mystique. En lui le théologien et le ‘spirituel’ ne se séparent pas.” Quoted in E. F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, Eng., 1957), p. 146.

'seeing,' the '*visio intellectualis*,' does not for him therefore coincide with mere mystic feeling: it has an independent theoretical meaning and content.¹⁸⁶

And if we may, finally, allow ourselves a fleeting forward glance at the nineteenth century, we immediately encounter the imposing figure of Coleridge, the very fabric of whose thought is pervaded by the union of the head and the heart; he who, in a famous early letter of December 17, 1796, wrote to Thelwall, "I feel strongly, and I think strongly; but I seldom feel without thinking, or think without feeling,"¹⁸⁷ and whose whole religious philosophy may be summed up in a single definition: "Faith is the focal energy from the convergency of the Reason and the Will, or the total Act of the entire Man arising from the interpenetration of the Reason and the Will."¹⁸⁸ On the Continent, one finds the same attitude—nay, the same temper—in one of the earliest German translators of Plato. "Among the last words recorded by his friends," says an expositor, "was a sentence which is expressive of his attitude toward theology, religion, and philosophy, and is therefore worth preserving: 'I must think the deepest speculative thoughts, and they are fully one with the

¹⁸⁶ Ernst Cassirer, "Giovanni Pico della Mirandola," *JHI* 3 (1942), 138.

¹⁸⁷ *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs (Oxford, 1956), I, 279.

¹⁸⁸ Coleridge, *Seventeenth Century*, p. 270. One should note, first, that "Reason" here is of course used in the Coleridgean sense to distinguish it from understanding; and, secondly, that "the Reason" includes both the objective noumenal world and the subjective faculty which corresponds to it. The "convergency" in faith is thus a dual one: 1) of individual will with individual reason; 2) of both with universal Reason. In his definitions of faith, Coleridge emphasizes sometimes one and sometimes the other. Cf. "Faith itself is but an Act of the Will assenting to the Reason on it's own evidence without, and even against, the Understanding" (*ibid.*, p. 173); "Faith, i.e., fidelity, the fealty of the finite Will and Understanding to the Reason—the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, as one with and representative of the Absolute Will" (pp. 182–183); "Faith seems to me the co-adunation of the individual Will with the Reason, enforcing adherence alike of Thought, Act, and Affection to the Universal Will, revealing whether in the Conscience or by Light of Reason, however the same may contravene, or apparently contradict, the will and mind of the flesh, the presumed experience of the senses and of the Understanding" (p. 197); "Faith is the *Apotheosis* of the reason in man; the Complement of Reason, the Will in the form of Reason" (p. 197).

inmost religious feelings.’”¹⁸⁹ The translator’s name? Friedrich Schleiermacher.

More’s fusion of will and intellect, expressed in an “illuminated Reason” on the one hand, and an “intellectual Love” on the other, is thus in the main stream of the Platonic tradition. Within that tradition, however, the emphasis may vary. In Plato himself, the intellectual element is far more dominant than it is in Plotinus, for instance.¹⁹⁰ Clement’s gnosis assigns a much smaller role to experience than does Origen’s. Gregory of Nyssa,¹⁹¹ in turn, finds Origen’s contemplative mysticism valid but inadequate, and sees man’s highest term as supraintellectual, a moving beyond *noeta* to *ousia*. And we may, of course, find a change of emphasis within a single writer. Ficino declared for the primacy of the intellect in his earlier writings, but in his later works reversed himself, and gave the palm to the will.¹⁹² Before leaving this aspect of More, then, let us point out where his own emphasis is placed.

I think it is clear that it lies with the will. We have already seen this to be true of his psychological views—as regards fact. It is equally true of his axiological views—with respect to values. Even on *this* side of him, More is by no means an intellectualist, in the sense that Plato, Aristotle, or Aquinas were. He recognizes the need for intellectual endeavor, but he sees it as more of a means than an end; an indispensable and an all-important means, to be sure, but nonetheless a means. Man’s highest goal he sees as love, rather than knowledge. “Love is . . . the highest Perfection that is competible to the Soul of man”;¹⁹³ “universal charity . . . is the highest accomplishment the Soul of Man is capable of either in this Life or that which is to come.”¹⁹⁴ Even in considering his “Intellectual Love,” “the most perfect, and the most Angelick Thing of all others; far excelling even Intellection it-

¹⁸⁹ R. B. Brandt, *The Philosophy of Schleiermacher* (New York, 1941), p. 12.

¹⁹⁰ See J. B. Collins, *Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age* (Baltimore, 1940), ch. i.

¹⁹¹ See Jean Daniélou, *Platonisme et Théologie Mystique* (Aubrier, 1944), p. 128.

¹⁹² See P. O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. V. B. Conant (New York, 1943), pp. 270–276.

¹⁹³ *Enth. Tri.*, sec. 19.

¹⁹⁴ *Myst. G.*, VIII.iii.4.

self,"¹⁹⁵ we should not forget which is the substantive and which the modifier. Intellection determines the quality of the emotion,¹⁹⁶ and enables it to conceive its object more clearly. But it is love that represents man's supreme fulfillment.

The point may be brought into sharper focus if we compare a passage expressing More's view of man's ultimate happiness with a corresponding passage in Aquinas. More's conception is clearly set forth near the conclusion of his "Defence of the Moral Cabbala." The passage is concerned initially with the familiar theme of the annihilation of self-will, but then continues to describe the "everlasting life":

And this personal life being thus destroyed, God calls unto them [i.e., those who have cast off the "personal life"] in the Dead of the Night, when all things are silent about them, awakes them, and raises them up, and breathes into them the breath of everlasting life, and ever actuates them by his own Spirit, and takes all the humane Faculties unto himself, guiding or allowing all their operations, always holding up the spirit of man so that he will never sink into sin; and from henceforth death and sorrow is swallowed up for ever, for the sting of Death is Sin . . .

¹⁹⁵ *Ench. Eth.*, II.ix.18.

¹⁹⁶ The term "intellectual love" may be variously understood. In many thinkers—in Spinoza, for example—it comes close to representing an actual love on the part of the intellect itself. At the other extreme, in Descartes (*Passions de L'Ame*, part 2, art. 91) it is purely an emotion, except that it is not physiologically stimulated, as is passion, but has its object presented by the understanding. Norris (*Theory and Regulation of Love*, pp. 31–34) makes a twofold distinction between "intellectual" and "sensitive" love. "This same Denomination of Intellectual and Sensitive may be taken from the Nature of the Part moved as well as from the Quality of the Object" (p. 31). Appetite is double, i.e., rational and sensitive, so that love may be both intellectual and sensitive—if one loves a sensual good with his rational appetite or an intellectual object with passion. In More, the term is apparently used with reference to "the Nature of that Part moved." His only definition is presented parenthetically in the *Ench. Eth.*, II.ix.14. He speaks of "Amorem illum quem nos, ut nullum cum ulla libidinosa spurcitie commercium habere satis intelligatur, semper appellamus Intellectualem." (The translation is very inexact here.) While he states that he only wishes to distinguish it from *libido*, his whole treatment of it makes it clear that he goes much beyond Descartes on this point, and that an actual intellectual element enters into the emotion. I do not think that he goes as far as Spinoza, however; nor as far as the term might imply to us. It should be remembered that the term "intellect" was sometimes used to denote understanding alone and sometimes both the understanding and the rational will, as distinct from

But as many as have passed the Death, have arrived to that Life that abides for ever and ever.

And this Life is pure and immaculate Love, and this Love is God, as he is communicable unto man, and is the sole Life and Essence of Vertue truly so called . . .

For the divine Love is the love of the divine Beauty, and that Beauty is the divine Life which would gladly insinuate it self, and become one with that particular Principle of Natural Life, the Soul of man.¹⁹⁷

Sharply in contrast is the Thomistic position:

It remains for us to conclude that man's ultimate happiness consists in the contemplation of truth . . .¹⁹⁸ Therefore to know God by an act of understanding is the last end of every intellectual substance . . . Therefore the human intellect attains to God as its end, by understanding Him . . . Therefore the knowledge of God is the last end of all human knowledge and activity.¹⁹⁹

Comment is superfluous. The *Conjectura Cabbalistica* has much to say regarding the importance of reason and knowledge. But even on this side of him, More's "rationalism" clearly has not affected his teleological *anschauung*.

We may conclude by referring back to a point mentioned earlier with respect to More's treatment of the divine attributes.

passion. See Norris, *Miscellanies*, p. 334, and R. L. Anderson, "Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare's Plays," *Humanistic Studies* 3 (1927), 20.

¹⁹⁷ "Defence," iii.24. An interesting comparison is once more supplied by Norris: "And here not to ingage in the Disputes concerning this Matter between the Thomists and Scotists, I shall resolve the Perfect and Beatific Fruition of God, partly into Vision and partly into Love. Tho' perhaps Vision may be allow'd to be the Radical and Principal Ingredient of our Happiness . . . These are the two arms with which we embrace the Divinity, and unite our Souls to the fair One and the Good. These I conceive are both so Essential to the perfect Fruition of God that the Idea of it can by no means be maintained, if either of them be wanting. For since God is both Supream Truth and infinite Goodness, he cannot be entirely possess'd, but by the most clear Knowledge, and the most ardent Love" ("An Idea of Happiness," in *Miscellanies*, p. 334). More, of course, would also have urged the need for both love and knowledge, as would have, indeed, Scotus and Aquinas themselves. But his emphasis is clearly upon the former, whereas Norris's view is more balanced. In the *Theory and Regulation of Love*, pp. 6-7, 59-60, however, Norris sees love, whether in God or man, as being far above understanding.

¹⁹⁸ *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. English Dominican Fathers (London, 1924), III, xxxvii.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, III, xxv.

It will be recalled that in successive paragraphs he speaks, first, of "Goodness, the Summity and Flower, if I may so speak, of the Divinity," and, then, of "these two chiefest Attributes of God, his Wisdom and his Goodness." Goodness is here apparently the apex, but in its exercise, wisdom is seen as an indispensable accessory. Such, in the aspect under present consideration, is also More's view of man's religious life. It has, like an ellipse, two foci, but, like a circle, only one center. Students of Platonism will remember the circle as the symbol of perfection; students of mathematics will remember it as the limiting case of the ellipse.

The Simplicity of Exclusion: The Decline of Intellection in Religion

RELIGIOUS anti-intellectualism represents one of the most striking forces affecting seventeenth-century English thought. Even throughout the "century of genius," it was prominent on many fronts. Suspicion of knowledge—the "zeal and jealousy of divines" which Bacon saw as obstructing the advancement of learning—was expressed in numerous forms and in different quarters. An eminently practical man, Bacon was not much given to fighting shadows, and this particular bugbear proved to be only too substantial. Opponents described the quest for knowledge—*scientia* no less than science—as being both spiritually dangerous and practically superfluous. Divines—and not only Puritan divines—held up *sapere ad sobrietatem* as a motto; and they invoked Augustine and Bernard, ransacked patristic and Scholastic literature, for support. In the perennial debate over the relative merits of the contemplative and practical lives, the full-throated advocates of practicality poured forth their message in increasingly strident tones. The "traditions of sobriety," as one scholar has called them, were very much in the air, and they exercised a significant influence upon moral and religious thought.

Surely, one might have expected to find a group such as the Cambridge Platonists unaffected by this climate. With the Platonists' emphasis upon rationality, with their pervasive "sweet reasonableness," we might have thought that the currents of anti-intellectualism would have left them untouched. And yet, in turning to More, we find this hardly to be the case. Far from

being exempt from traces of the opposition to knowledge, More rather displays them prominently. We have heretofore been concerned with the first aspect of More's theology. It is one which, while it does not conceive man's highest felicity in intellectual terms, nevertheless recognizes the importance of reason as an indispensable aid in the conduct of the religious life. The exercise of thought it views as a vital element of man's search for spiritual fulfillment, and it tends to think of knowledge as a valuable ally of religion and morality, rather than as a possible rival. But we have now to consider a second aspect, in which More is seen in an entirely different light. Here he emphasizes rather the opposition—actual or potential—between man's intellectual and moral natures. Knowledge—and, above all, the search for it—is considered a snare and a delusion, diverting man from his true course. Religion is treated as being, on its speculative side, a relatively simple matter. Whatever knowledge men really need, they either already possess or can easily acquire. Their efforts should consequently be better devoted to the cultivation of their moral and religious will, and More intimates that this can be accomplished with little ratiocinative effort and without any strenuous intellectual discipline. Instead of emphasizing the exercise of reason, More urges the overriding importance of practical ethical conduct, with particular regard for basically social virtues. Speculative endeavor is often treated as a luxury, the indulgent enterprise of a few rather than the duty or destiny of all. In a word, we shall find More displaying, on this side of him, a distinctly anti-intellectual bias.

It should be emphasized at once that we shall be principally concerned with More's attitude rather than his activity. More himself had a thoroughly intellectual nature and spent the better part of his life engaged in the pursuit of various studies. He was—often despite himself—every inch what Norris called him—an "intellectual epicure." The "hydroptique, immoderate desire of humane learning" (to use Donne's phrase) which had so enthralled More in his youth was sublimated rather than extinguished, and the *libido sciendi* remained with More throughout life. "I must indeed confess," he writes in the preface to his *Mystery of Godliness*, "that free Speculation and that easie

springing up of coherent Thoughts and Conceptions within is a Pleasure to me far above any thing I ever received from external Sense; and that lazy activity of Mind in compounding and dis-severing of Notions and Ideas in the silent observation of their natural connexions and disagreements, as a Holy-day and Sabbath of rest to the Soul.”¹ To the enjoyment of this “pleasure” More devoted much—perhaps most—of his adult life. Whatever one may think of his writings, that they testify to a proclivity for “free Speculation” can hardly be denied. In speaking of More’s anti-intellectualism, therefore, it is of his views rather than his actions that we must take account. To the presentation and analysis of these views we may now turn.

More’s anti-intellectualism may be said to begin—I refer to a logical, rather than a temporal development—with his consideration of knowledge in its isolation, dis-severed from the context of man’s moral life. Knowledge pure and simple More viewed with caution, perhaps even with suspicion. The life of reason is a “middle” one, which can be subjoined to either the animal or the divine, and its exercise needs to be carefully guarded. Like all religious humanists—Petrarch and Erasmus before him, Brémond and Maritain after him, and together with his contemporary, Milton—More is constantly aware of the further danger that man’s absorption in his intellectual pursuits may become all-engrossing, thus in effect obscuring his higher destiny, and confusing a means for an end. And the desire for knowledge misapplied he sees as not merely ineffectual but positively harmful: “‘All men have a natural desire of knowledge.’ It is an Aphorism in Aristotle . . . But whatever is natural to the Soul, unless it be regulated and bounded with the divine Light, will prove her mischief and bane.”² Misdirected, or even undirected, even the Scripture may prove misleading, so that “to the Hypocrite and disobedient that read them for to peep into knowledge, or to furnish themselves with learned and religious partes, they are a snare to the understanding, and fill them with a very mis-shapen conceit and imagination, that neither true Divinity nor Nature will allow of.”³ The Devil, it seems, can not only quote

¹ *Myst. G.*, “Preface,” sec. 1.

² “Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala,” iii.5.

³ November 28, 1652, *Con. L.*, p. 68.

Scripture, but may assume its pleasing shape, and one must beware of his ensnaring blandishments. For, falsely approached, even truth itself may become perverted and perverting.

In themselves, such statements hardly constitute an anti-intellectual tendency. Being simply the obverse side of the coin whose face proclaims the interdependence of knowledge and morality, they are fully consistent with the most thoroughgoing intellectualism. But they do open the door for an attitude which should habitually consider knowledge as something of a subversive force, and this, in turn, may lead one to take an unfavorable view of intellection in general. While guarding vigorously against the dangers of excessive rationalism, one may lose sight of the fact that intellection also bears another and more favorable aspect. We may thus tend—at times perhaps subconsciously—to associate intellectual activity with our baser nature, and place knowledge over *against* morality rather than at its side. Reason may be intermediate between the animal and the divine lives, but our ultimate outlook will likely be very much affected by our being accustomed to think of it in conjunction with one or the other.

The door thus opened More might have carefully shunned, but one cannot avoid feeling that its invitation proved too strong. At any rate, we repeatedly find him contrasting knowledge—often represented as mere barren speculation—with various presumably higher values. His “vital” and experiential emphasis, for instance, leads More to contrast “‘a certain Life and Sense’” with “‘the Driness of mere Reason,’”⁴ “Scholastick Theory” with “Vital and Sensible enjoyment.”⁵ Or he goes even further in contrasting intellection with religion proper, seeing “the Heart” as the true and almost sole source of spiritual insight. Thus, after Philotheus had pointed the path to “the internal Kingdom of God,” he concludes: “These all are the Mysteries of the Heart, O Philopolis, not of the Head, which in comparison, is but an outward Shop of Phancies and fine Pictures . . . Wherefore, O Philopolis, he that is a Candidate for the Kingdom of God, let him above all things cultivate the Heart; for through this only is the inlet into the Kingdom of Light.”⁶ The comparison is,

⁴ Quoted in Ward, *Life*, p. 150.

⁵ *Apology*, viii.13.

⁶ *Div. Dia.*, pp. 307–308.

furthermore, often entirely gratuitous, sometimes appearing out of a clear blue sky. In reading More's account of the angels' fall, we—fresh from reading Augustine, Milton, and a host of intermediaries—are hardly surprised when we see “That dear Compassion of fellow-Creatures, and faithful and fast Obedience to the Will of God” contrasted with “all Power and Knowledge whatsoever.”⁷ Nor, perhaps, when we find that the deception of Eve, the first instance of “the treachery and stratagems of the Lusts against the Soul,” stemmed from the *libido sciendi*—“A pretence of enlarging our Knowledge and Experience in things, that it is fit to know the World, and by real Proof to judge of the estimate of things, and not to be cooped up with such narrow bounds, and thereby remain simple and ignorant.”⁸ Somewhat more startling, however—and hence more revealing—is a letter to Worthington in which More begins by describing the path to true happiness, and then quickly introduces intellectual pursuits for the purposes of contrast. “The most certain and compendious way” of attaining happiness, he writes, is “to be as ready to thwart a man's self, as providence is to thwart one . . . Neither many words, nor much knowledge, nor the voluminousness of books, which are the disadvantages of our academical education, are any thing to this, but it is the perpetual taking up of the Cross, and constant endeavour to shun a man's own will and appetite, that leads directly, to this resurrection of life and peace and joy.”⁹ Or again, we can consider a letter in which, after touching upon the familiar theme of the need for “a perfect exinanition of our selves,” More comments: “All knowledge to this is but vain fluttering, a Feather in a mans Cap tossed with the wind. Here is firm Anchorage, Rest, and such a Peace as passes all understanding.”¹⁰ Helen Keller is reported to have told a friend that “I do not want the peace which passeth understanding. I want the understanding which bringeth peace”;¹¹ and her view is one which will certainly find many adherents. But surely even for one who disagrees with her, holding that “far above all the

⁷ “Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala,” iii.15.

⁸ *Discourses*, pp. 18–19.

⁹ Worthington, *Diary and Correspondence*, II, 79.

¹⁰ January 16, 1685/6, *Norris-More Corr.*, pp. 158–159.

¹¹ Reported by Leonard Lyons, *Boston Herald*, January 2, 1957, p. 23.

exercizes of reason is that peace of God which passeth all understanding,"¹² there was little need here for introducing knowledge only in order to deprecate it as "vain fluttering" in comparison with "self-exinanition."

A similar tendency towards the denigration of intellectual activity is evident in More's eschatological writings. Speaking of the millennium, More envisions it as an era in which "Contentions about Opinions shall then cease, they being priz'd only by the Pride and Curiosity of the Natural Man, and all the goodly Inventions of nice Theologers shall then cease, and all the foolish and perplexing Arguments of the disputacious Schools shall be laid aside, and the Gospel shall be exalted in that Day."¹³ To be sure, we may mitigate the effect of the passage somewhat, by remembering the Platonic distinction between opinion (*doxa*) and knowledge (*episteme*); perhaps, also, by assuming that More's "the Gospel" constitutes, in itself, an opinion. But the tone remains disturbing, to say the least. Certainly, one would have liked to hear that there *are* contentions about opinions which appeal to something besides "the Pride and Curiosity of the Natural Man." Even if one does not assume, with Mill and Newman, that it is *only* through contention that truth is discovered, some allowance for discussion—albeit heated—must, after all, be made. Equally distressing is the treatment accorded scientific knowledge in another eschatological passage, midway through the fifth and last of the *Divine Dialogues*. In the midst of a discussion of the Messianic mission of Elijah, Philopolis suggests that "he will be a great Promoter of Wisdom and Learning." Philotheus is quick to restrain him, however: "Such you do not mean, Philopolis, as the finding out the Quadrature of the Circle, or a perpetual Motion . . . I told you before he will be a Restorer of useful Truth; and it may be, of such clear and plain Principles as may solve the most concerning Difficulties that Humane Reason is subject to be entangled withal. But I do not believe that he will be an Abettour of any useless Subtilties, or of any Knowledge that promotes not Vertue and the common good."¹⁴ More is presumably advancing the common humanistic thesis that

¹² December 31, 1663, *Con. L.*, p. 220.

¹³ *Myst. G.*, X.ix.4.

¹⁴ *Div. Dia.*, pp. 473-474.

ethical knowledge must take precedence over scientific studies. But one can only wonder under which heading true science has here been subsumed. To assume that it is included in the "useful Truth" which promotes "Vertue and the common good" appears to involve stretching these terms unduly, particularly in the light of more specific catalogues we shall presently consider. There would seem to be little question but that More's "useful Truth" is of an eminently practical nature. He is—at this time, certainly—poles removed from a figure like, say, Nicholas Cusanus, who sought to arrive at an *amor Dei intellectualis* via the intensive study of abstract mathematics. To think that mathematics has here been represented by "the Quadrature of the Circle" and physics by the conundrum of "perpetual Motion" is a rather painful alternative, but apparently an inescapable one. We may palliate it somewhat by holding that true science does not enter the picture at all here; More is simply comparing valuable moral knowledge and useless scientific speculation. But the modification is, in any event, minor in nature. The omission of thoughtful scientific pursuits still leaves the reader with the impression that the only alternatives are practical ethical studies or a farrago of airy nonsense. To say the least, More has stacked the deck unfairly, and, one might think, unnecessarily.

More's tendency to oppose ratiocination to true religion and morality thus becomes clear. As the foregoing passage from the *Divine Dialogues* testifies, however, this relation does not apply to all speculation. There are "useful" truths of whose study More always approves very highly, and for whose advancement he cannot press too strongly. The pursuit of knowledge may qualify as a legitimate endeavor where it serves the specific interests of morality—where it promotes "Vertue and the common good." "Affect not Knowledge," More writes to an anonymous correspondent, J. D., "any further than it is the Food of Life and Virtue, and enables us to be and act as we ought."¹⁵ *Prima facie*, we are simply confronted once more by the familiar concept of the union of knowledge and morality, the respective products of the intellect and the will. Such is not quite the case, however. Whereas we had previously seen More holding that the moral

¹⁵ January 28, 1675/6, "Select Letters," in Ward, *Life*, p. 248.

will must be a factor in intellectual endeavor, we now find him urging that morality itself must be at once the ultimate object and the immediate subject of human speculation. These two positions are by no means identical. Thus, when More stated "that the adequate object of our Wills or Desires, is that which is Good, and that therefore Knowledge it self is not desireable but upon this account, so far forth as it makes us good and happy,"¹⁶ he was *not* saying that the only knowledge which does make us "good and happy" is that which is immediately concerned with conduct and is instrumental in promoting "Vertue and the common good." It may very well turn out that both our goodness and our happiness are dependent upon the knowledge of a great deal which has not the slightest direct bearing upon conduct. Thus, when we find More holding that intellection be, by and large, confined to the study of human conduct, his views represent a considerable advance upon—or, if you will, a retrogression from—the position discussed earlier.

Whether More is actually going beyond this position will depend upon the purport of expressions such as "Vertue and the common good" or "to be and act as we ought." Understood in their widest latitude they are virtually all-embracing, and if given proper compass, they could indeed be said—even by an intellectualist—to include all that man truly knows and all he needs to know. One could hardly take exception to the position expressed in—of all places—the concluding section of "An Answer to a Letter of a Learned Psychopyrist." We must, More emphasizes, escape "any vain Desire of Knowledge it self, which bears such a fair and commendable Show with it." The true ends of knowledge must be "to corroborate our Faith in God" and furthermore, "to confirm our Belief of a glorious Immortality after this Life, to promote true Devotion, Mortification, and Regeneration, or the Renovation of our lapsed Natures into the lost Image of God: all Desire of Knowledge, that tends not to this End, is but a Disease with a truly holy Man, nor relishes better with him, than to feed on Chaff, Feathers, or dry Straw, relisheth with a natural Man."¹⁷ Nor could one describe as anti-intellectual More's advice

¹⁶ *Discourses*, p. 19.

¹⁷ "An Answer to a Letter of a Learned Psychopyrist," sec. 34.

to Lady Conway, urging her to "sett no price at all upon knowledge, but so far as it will make us vertuous, and obedient to God that made us . . . And for my own part I know it by experience, that I found more true knowledge by not seeking after knowledge, then I have by seeking, and could never be at rest till I cared not whether I knew any thing or noe, but made it my whole businesse to attain to that Rectitude of minde which my own conscience obliged me to, and to arrive to that measure of Simplicity that is competible to the nature of a man."¹⁸ In such passages, More is simply stating that knowledge must not become our *sole* end, but must take its place within the context of a moral and religious life. Compare with them, however, the penultimate section of the *Divine Dialogues*. As the discussions draw to a close, Philopolis breaks out in rapturous praise of the contemplative life led by Philotheus and his companions: "You seem to me a Company that live the most delicious and Seraphick Lives that I could ever imagine any to do upon this Earth . . . I am so infinitely transported with your excellent Converse, that I am almost out of conceit with my own condition of Life, and could wish I had never been engaged in the care of a Wife and a Family, or any other Secular Occasions, that I might join my self for ever to your blessed Society." But Philotheus is quick to check his impetuous enthusiasm:

God forbid, Philopolis, that the sweet of Contemplation should ever put your Mouth out of tast with the savoury Usefulness of Secular Negotiations. To do good to Men, to assist the injured, to relieve the necessitous, to advise the ignorant in his necessary Affairs, to bring up a Family in the fear of God and a chearful hope of everlasting Happiness after this Life, does as much transcend our manner of living, if it ended in a mere pleasing our selves in the delicacy of select Notions, as solid Goodness does empty Phantasty, or sincere Charity the most childish Sophistry that is. The exercise of Love and Goodness, of Humanity and Brotherly-kindness, of Prudence and Discretion, of Faithfulness and Neighbourliness, of unfeigned Devotion and Religion, in the plain and undoubted Duties thereof, is to the truly regenerate Soul a far greater pleasure than all the fine Speculations imaginable.

Quick to get the point, Philopolis now interrupts Philotheus, but only to reiterate his remarks: "I am fully convinced that all

¹⁸ April 4, 1653, *Con. L.*, p. 76.

Speculation is vain that tends not to the Duty of Practice, nor enables a Man the better to perform what he owes to God, to his Prince and Country, to his Family, Neighbours and Friends.”¹⁹

On this note, More's most popular work moves towards its conclusion. The overriding concern with practical morality, and particularly with social conduct, is readily apparent. Speculation which does not tend “to the Duty of Practice,” truth which is not “useful,” is, at best, a gratifying pleasure and, at worst, a piece of foolish vanity. That intellectual endeavor and the search for truth are in themselves eminent virtues, is hardly intimated. Even within the moral and religious life, intellection is seen as a direct means to another end, and to a rather narrow end at that. A term such as “useful truth” does not have quite as strong a utilitarian connotation for More as it does for us. But nonetheless, in positing it as a criterion, More is minimizing considerably the importance of the exercise of reason as an aspect of the religious, or even moral, life.

It is rather difficult to take issue with More, for his basic premise is virtually unassailable. In any scale of “goods” or values, morality must no doubt take precedence over knowledge. We recall that, even in the midst of an exuberant encomium of knowledge, Milton pointed out that “virtue without knowledge is more conducive to a happy life than knowledge without virtue.”²⁰ Certainly, if forced to choose between character devoid of knowledge or the converse, we should all unhesitatingly choose the former alternative. But one feels More too often forgets, first of all, that such is not necessarily our choice; secondly, that intellectual virtues—the *desire* for truth and the *love* of wisdom—are in themselves eminent *moral* qualities; and thirdly, that, as he himself so often eloquently declares, knowledge *within* a moral context is very different from knowledge without it, and that within such a context, the quest for wisdom and its possession may be essential aspects of right human character. To limit morality to virtues or duties principally social, is to confine it unduly, and to leave undeveloped much of the deepest side of man's personality. As W. D. Ross pointed out, while we must

¹⁹ *Div. Dia.*, pp. 525–526.

²⁰ “Seventh Prolusion,” in *Works*, XII, 261.

undoubtedly assume that "moral goodness is infinitely better than knowledge," we must concurrently recognize that "the doctrine that morality is entirely social, that all duty consists in promoting the good of others" represents "a profound mistake. Intellectual integrity, the love of truth for its own sake, is among the most salient elements in a good moral character . . . That which (I am suggesting) is less good than virtue is not the intellectual life in its concreteness, which is the manifestation of a high and precious excellence of character, but the bare being in possession of knowledge irrespective of the character from which this springs."²¹ The remarks are such as would have been appreciated—indeed expressed—by the More we saw in the last chapter. But they are hardly consistent with the attitude dominating the aspect of More under present consideration.

II

The full extent of More's anti-intellectual tendencies can best be understood in connection with his view of the simplicity of religion. More's position is based upon two assumptions. He emphasizes, first, that religion consists, on its speculative side, of only a few essential propositions. "Truth lies in a little room, especially that of it that is most useful,"²² Philotheus declares in the *Divine Dialogues*, and the same note is struck in countless other passages. The very words—"the most concerning truths lye in a little roome"—occur in a letter to Anne Conway as well as in the *Enchiridion Ethicum*²³ and, quoted from Plato, had been used earlier in "The Defence of the Moral Cabbala"—"it is an excellent saying of Plato's, in an Epistle of his to Dionysius, *to alethes en brachei keithai*."²⁴ "That Truth lies in a little room":

²¹ *The Right and the Good* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 152-153.

²² *Div. Dia.*, p. 306.

²³ September 14, 1661, *Con. L.*, p. 193; *Ench. Eth.*, II.x.4.

²⁴ Either More's memory or his text failed him here slightly. The only passage in the Platonic epistles which resembles More's quotation occurs in the famous "Seventh Epistle" (generally assumed to be authentic), addressed, not to Dionysius, but to "the relatives and the friends of Dion"; and the correct text reads *panton gar en brachytatois keitai* (*Platonis Opera*, ed. J. Burnet [Oxford, 1907], V, 344e). Significantly, it occurs in a context in which Plato emphasizes not the ease but the difficulty—almost the impossibility—of attaining ultimate knowledge.

and assuredly that which is best and most precious does.”²⁵ And of course the imposition of “uncertain and useless Opinions” upon the masses is one of the faults with which More, like so many other Protestant polemicists, charges Catholicism—“is not one fundamental Miscarriage in that Church, That they make things Fundamental that are not, and mingle their own humane Inventions with the infallible Oracles of God, and imperiously obtrude them upon the People.”²⁶

Secondly, More holds that the few truths which are essential, are in themselves simple and may be easily apprehended with little intellectual effort. He is constantly insisting that religion does not—or need not—include any abstruse points and contains little which cannot be readily understood. There is a recurring intimation that subtlety—“shifting subtilty” is the more apposite term—is somehow an attribute associated with the powers of darkness, or at best, with the inhabitants of limbo; in the kingdom of light all is as clear as day. This emphasis upon the plainness of religious truth will be seen to have widespread ramifications, but it may best be considered in connection with one fundamental problem. The problem is a perennial one, confronting all theologians. Stated briefly, it is simply this: Religion must be accessible to all; some definitive intellectual content must enter into religion; and yet the great majority of men cannot or will not reason profoundly about religious or metaphysical questions. Various solutions are possible, and have indeed been presented. There is, first of all, fideism, which recognizes an intellectual element, dogma, in religion, but insists that it is not bound up with intellectual processes. For it holds that its knowledge can only be attained by explicit supernatural revelation, assumed to be the sole source of religious truth, and upon which all are equally dependent. To the fideist, the simpleton therefore presents no more of a problem than the philosopher; all must accept on faith what none can achieve through reason.

Roman Catholicism has generally inclined towards a second solution, which we may call an aristocratic and authoritarian intellectualism. Unlike fideism, this view does recognize human

²⁵ “Defence,” i.28.

²⁶ *Myst. G.*, V.xvii.7.

reason as a valid factor in the religious situation, for through its exercise man can discover the principles of natural religion and develop and interpret those of revelation. But the task of development and interpretation is generally delegated to a scholarly elite represented by an ecclesiastical hierarchy. For the members of this group, theology is recognized as a difficult and intricate science whose development is incumbent upon them as a sacred duty, and the results of their intellectual efforts are accepted as essential elements of the faith. The commonalty, however, is not engaged in such intellectual pursuits. It simply accepts the basic truths whose explicit knowledge is deemed indispensable for salvation and which have therefore been clearly presented in Scripture; for the rest, *implicit* popular faith in the decisions of the *maiores ecclesiae* is considered sufficient. The masses themselves are not expected to master such abstruse matters, nor are they encouraged to delve into them; in *their* religious life, rational endeavor is not an essential element.²⁷

A third solution—familiarized by Newman's classic *Grammar of Assent*²⁸—goes further, incorporating intellectual effort into individual religious life. Newman's thesis is that there are two avenues to religious knowledge. One is the arduous path of scientific theology which can lead to certitude but which, alas, is accessible only to the select few. The other also entails an intellectual element, but—requiring only ordinary effort and capacity—it is open to all. The only trouble is that it does not lead to absolute certitude in the solution of difficult religious questions; it only offers overwhelming probability. But, Newman argues, such logical certitude is not truly necessary for the maintenance of religious belief. For, in the first place, "real"—as

²⁷ See, e.g., Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 1. The last sentence perhaps does not accurately reflect Aquinas' view, but I do think the statement is true of historical Catholicism which, until comparatively recent times, generally discouraged popular study of religious questions, and—as Protestant critics did not fail to point out—even looked askance at widespread study of the Bible.

²⁸ It might be pointed out that the *Grammar* was specifically addressed to the "popular" problem, Newman declaring that "its object would be to show that a given individual, high or low, has as much right (has as much real rational grounds) to be certain, as a learned theologian who knows the scientific evidence" (Quoted in Harrold, *Newman*, p. 124). Harrold's chapter—"The Logical Cogency of Faith: How We Believe," pp. 118–162—offers a good summary and discussion of Newman's position.

contrasted with “notional”—assent is not purely logical, but rather involves the “whole man,” engaging the whole complex of human personality; and secondly, as regards the “whole man,” in religion as in all areas of human life, there is no need for incontrovertible demonstrative evidence—the presumptive proof of overwhelming likelihood is sufficient, even *rationally*, both to command assent and to supply a basis for action and decision. Religious knowledge is thus universally accessible, for every one is capable of cultivating “the right state of heart” in conjunction with which his intellectual powers can develop the moral certitude adequate to his capacities.

While Newman succeeds in establishing “the logical cogency of faith,” he does not fully—and permanently—incorporate intellection into individual religious life. He is not so much concerned with the obligation to rational endeavor as with its possibility. Moreover, he tends to see intellection as a means of reaching a specific destination of belief, rather than as a constant coefficient of the religious life. Judaism, in presenting a fourth solution, has therefore gone a step further. Insisting that God must be served with the head as well as with hands and heart, it has seen intellection as an integral aspect of the religious experience of every individual. It has recognized that, in man’s quest for God, significant success in the exercise of reason cannot come to all—or to many—but it has demanded that none forgo the attempt. It is precisely for the effort, the *process* of the *recherche*, that traditional Judaism has pressed most insistently. Of *y’diath hatorah*, the knowledge of Torah, the Rabbis had relatively little to say, but of *talmud Torah*, the study of Torah, they can never say enough. Judaism has consequently set up studying as one of the most basic of man’s normative obligations, has indeed posited it as a universal daily duty. And it has furthermore conceded—nay, insisted—that the study it so urgently enjoins need not have a directly pragmatic aim; the intellectual quest for God is its own justification. Decision, Jewish tradition has of course reserved for competent authority; if there is no royal road to knowledge, neither is there a demotic. But the *peregrinatio* is the duty and destiny of all.²⁹

²⁹ Of a large literature virtually saturated with this theme, one might merely mention *Talmud Bavli*, *Kiddushin* 29b–30b; Rambam, *Mishneh*

Of course there may be more facile solutions. The Gordian knot may be most easily loosed by dispensing with one of the ropes, and various thinkers have attempted to dismiss our problem by disposing of one of its elements. Thus, J. M. E. McTaggart was firm in stressing the importance of an intellectual and even metaphysical basis for religion and also recognized that a propensity for metaphysics or theology is far from common. But he resolved the issue with the rather startling assertion that religion is not really essential for all; every one is obligated to be moral, but religion is a rare attainment reserved for the select few.³⁰ McTaggart's thesis is somewhat radical, to say the least, and others have attempted pulling at another strand. Most tempting has been the conjecture that the masses have been grossly underestimated, and that, given a slight nudge, they could become truly proficient in even the higher provinces of learning. Such a view is not too far from the minds and hearts of the early Reformers, with their insistence upon the competence of individual interpretation. And in our period, it finds a clear advocate in the "ever-memorable" John Hales of Eton.³¹ But its maintenance requires, at the very least, a pair of rose-colored glasses; in fact, perhaps nothing short of total blindness will suffice. And the question remains.

In the light of a remark of Professor Shorey's, the problem may be said to have had, for More, a special relevance. Shorey has advanced the thesis that the "fundamental difference between Christianity and Platonism" is that "Platonism is intellectual and aristocratic in its appeal . . . Christianity emotional and popular . . . Plato describes conversion as a turning about of the eye of the mind from transitory and material to abiding and ideal objects. For popular Christianity it is a change of heart."³² One may

Torah, "Hilchot Talmud Torah," chs. i-iii; and S. J. Zevin, *L'Or Hahalacha*, 2nd ed. (Tel Aviv, 1957), pp. 204-212.

³⁰ See *Some Dogmas of Religion* (London, 1906), pp. 13, 31-37, and 291-299.

³¹ See, for instance, the selection entitled "On Private Judgment in Religion," in "Tracts of the Ever Memorable John Hales: with Selections from his Works," in *A Collection of Essays and Tracts in Theology*, ed. Jared Sparks (Boston, 1825), V, 50-66. See also James H. Elson, *John Hales of Eton* (New York, 1948), pp. 85-108.

³² Paul Shorey, *Platonism Ancient and Modern* (Berkeley, Calif., 1938), p. 87.

therefore ask where this leaves Christian Platonists; and, as a matter of fact, they have not been oblivious to the problem. We may once again glance briefly at the Alexandrians. Both Clement and Origen posited two classes of believers, one of which was to enjoy the free exercise of rational speculative inquiry, and the other of which was to be nursed along. "One of Origen's most frequently expressed opinions," writes a recent editor, "is that there are two classes of Christians, the less mature and the more mature, to whom respectively teaching must be adapted according to their spiritual capacity to receive it."³³ Thus, in replying to Celsus' charge that Christian faith is non-rational—the *kouphotes ton Christianon* which attracted Arnold's attention—Origen replies, "My answer to this is that if every man could abandon the business of life and devote his time to philosophy, no other course ought to be followed but this alone." Such a philosophy could be pursued within a religious framework, but nevertheless there is need for a popular faith, "since, partly owing to the necessities of life, and partly owing to human weakness, very few people are enthusiastic about rational thought."³⁴ And in any event, he goes on to say, such an unphilosophical faith has at least raised the level of popular morality. Clement, whose gnosis is even more thoroughly intellectual than Origen's, adopts a similar position. In the opening pages of his *Stromateis* he declares that most men neither have nor can have true knowledge "which must be dispensed according to the ability of the recipient."³⁵ "The Mysteries of the Faith Not to Be Divulged to All," is consequently the title of a chapter in the first book, and this aristocratic spirit is very much in evidence throughout Clement's works.³⁶

³³ *Alexandrian Christianity: Selected Translations of Clement and Origen*, ed. John E. L. Oulton and Henry Chadwick (Philadelphia, 1954), p. 199.

³⁴ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge, Eng., 1953), p. 12.

³⁵ *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria*, trans. William Wilson (Edinburgh, 1867), I, 350.

³⁶ I, xii. The influence of Greek esoteric mysteries would appear to be still lingering in Clement's blood. His *Exhortation to the Greeks* remains to this day one of the richest sources of information about these secret rites, and scholars have often conjectured that Clement very likely had been initiated into them in his youth.

The Alexandrians' position obviously resembles the view associated above with Roman Catholicism. But, if I read both groups correctly, there is only

Omitting a discussion of other Christian Platonists, we may move directly to More. The solutions we have noticed he would have deemed inadequate. That he considered religion universally indispensable goes without saying. Fideism he rejected and recourse to authority he disliked. With processes he was less concerned than with their results. Of the general neglect of speculation he was fully aware—"there are very few Men given to Contemplation, and yet fewer successful in it."³⁷ More was thus left with one solution—the assumption and the advocacy of the simplicity of religion.³⁸ If intellectual activity lacks widespread application, then we must assume it is not particularly relevant to the quest for salvation. Rational endeavor is thus relegated to a relatively incidental role. An interest in speculation may be retained, but only to be regarded as an "interest," rather than as a vital need. It is to the cultivation of the will and its manifestation in conduct that attention must be devoted.

We thus find More minimizing the role of intellection in human life, and emphasizing rather the more obvious aspects of conduct. This "democratic" conception he makes the basis of a departure from the Aristotelian conception of happiness as consisting in contemplation—"But we presume to say, this [contemplation] can be no moral Happiness; since it would be confined to a few speculative Men and Philosophers, and so shut out the Bulk of Mankind, who could never be partakers thereof."³⁹ The passage is, at most, only mildly anti-intellectual, but it presages the

resemblance, not identity. In reading the Alexandrians, one very definitely gets the impression that the popular faith is assumed to be generically different from the philosophical; that, in fact, popular belief is almost an *ersatz* faith, while true faith can only be achieved through *gnosis*. For Roman Catholic thinkers, however, the content of faith and its essence are the same for all, only they are variously arrived at—the *maiores ecclesiae* discovering them directly, while the masses learn them through an agent, so to speak.

³⁷ *Div. Dia.*, p. 99.

³⁸ Not that More sat down with the problem and, scanning all possible solutions, arrived at this one by a process of elimination. But his references to it indicate that, to him—as to numerous eighteenth-century thinkers—the "popular" problem was a crucial consideration urging the assumption of a simpler religion. It has therefore seemed advisable to treat this problem in a more general and analytical way.

³⁹ *Ench. Eth.*, I.ii.6.

direction in which the *Enchiridion Ethicum* is to move. The final chapter in the second book is the chapter immediately following More's discussion of intellectual love, and after a glance at the title, "Of Good Things, which are External," we are half-tempted to skip it. One supposes that—like the duller parts of the *Nicomachean Ethics*—it deals with the relevance to virtue of health, beauty, riches, or similar relatively adventitious factors. The opening paragraph catches our eye, however, and we realize that we are in for a surprise.⁴⁰ "Tis not," More begins,

only such Things that are placed without a Man, that we call External Goods; but whatever is placed without in respect to Virtue: I mean without which Virtue may consist in its Perfection, altho such things may indeed pass as Ornaments to her, and as necessary Complements unto Happiness. And these are threefold; either in respect of the Soul, of the Body, or of both.

And which are these "external goods" that relate to the soul? They are "the Dexterity or Subtilty of the Wit, a vast and faithful Memory: Also Science, Art and Sapience." More takes up these items individually:

I would fain know what great matter is gotten by Subtilty of Wit; if a man be otherwise prudent, if his Mind be firm and unshaken, if he have Love towards his Neighbor, and Good Will for Mankind? . . . To hear one lament his Unhappiness, for want of such high Subtilty, or Dexterity of Wit, is little other, than if a Man shou'd complain he was not able to walk, because not able, as some Juglers, to dance upon a Rope.

More clearly has a point here. Obviously, we cannot consider any specific degree of intellectual attainment essential to happiness. Capacities vary, and hardly any two people are endowed with the same ratiocinative ability. And truly a lament over native shortcomings does smack of futility, perhaps even of folly. One can no more lament the lack of Macaulay's memory than he can bemoan his not being twelve feet tall or his having neither an eagle's wings nor Jesse Owens' resiliency. But More does not stop here. From saying that the dexterity of wit is not an indispensable ingredient of happiness, he moves on to assuming that neither is the constant exercise of reason necessary for the

⁴⁰ The following quotations are from *Ench. Eth.*, II.x.

attainment of felicity. His image is as revealing as its implications are startling, perhaps even frightening. Apparently, higher knowledge is to virtue as rope-dancing is to walking. Intellectual achievement beyond the level of basic principles is to be looked upon as some sort of mental acrobatics. It's a feather in a man's cap, if he can do it; but it is nothing which is demanded of him, nor apparently anything for which he need strive. Simple essentials will suffice, "For the good and perfect Man is not so much actuated by a list of Precepts gotten without Book, as by living inwardly, and printing in his Mind a single and sincere Sense of Things. From this alone he will be able to know whatever Duty lies incumbent on him; just as, by one Candle, a Man may see all the variety of Objects before him." The rest is just so much icing:

As to Science, Art, and Sapience; we do not conceive they are so very essential unto Happiness. For tho Aristotle says, "That Science is about necessary Matters, and such as are not subject to Alteration"; Yet this our Happiness does not consist in those immutable Things, but in the single Constancy of Mind, and in a steady Resolution to prosecute in all our Actions, that which is simply and absolutely the best.

Knowledge may be caviar to the general, but More reminds us again that his concern is for the million—"That Happiness which is due to human Nature, is a plainer Thing, and a more common Good, than to be calculated only for Philosophers and Artists." More then concludes the discussion with the qualification that the knowledge of certain fundamental principles is nevertheless requisite for happiness—"such Intelligence as, by Andronicus, is defin'd, To be the Knowledge of Principles, can by no means be separate from Happiness." The reservation is an important one, and we shall have occasion to return to it. But it does not alter More's basic position. Happiness must be a common good, but knowledge is beyond the grasp of many, and perhaps most; ergo, "perfect Happiness, which is that Pleasure that ariseth from a Sense of Virtue, and a Conscience of Well-doing, may want Science, Art, and Sapience."

In a more specifically religious context, the same view is expressed in the *Divine Dialogues*, in the course of Philotheus'

presentation of More's theodicy.⁴¹ Early in the third dialogue—virtually all of the second had been devoted to a justification of Providence—Hylobares asserts that he has found himself still troubled by lingering doubts regarding certain “enormous Deformities and Defects that every where are conspicuous in the Nations of the Earth.” The first defect concerns “the paucity of Philosophers”—“How squalid and forlorn the World seemed to me by reason there are so very few Philosophers in it. For the rest of Mankind seemed to me little to differ from Baboons or Beasts.” The objection is warmly seconded by Cuphophron—the “zealous, but Aiery-minded, Platonist and Cartesian, or Mechanist”—who adds the lament that even of the few philosophers, only a small minority are “thorough-paced Cartesians.” But Philotheus is quick to dispel their apprehensions:

Admit that few are born to Philosophy, yet all in a manner are born to far better matters: that is to say, It is in the power of every Man to be Religious, Just, and Vertuous, and to enjoy the wholesome Pleasures of the Animal life in a pious and rational way. Wherefore there being so short a cut every where to Prudence and Religion (if a Man be sincere and faithful), I see not how any one is excluded from the most substantial Happiness humane Nature is capable of. But for other Knowledge, if it were every Man's, it were scarce the enjoyment of any Man. But the confident Ignorance of the rude and the unexpected Paradoxicalness of the skilful do fitly furnish out the Stage of things, and make more for the sport and pleasure of life, and enhance the price and compensate the labour of finding out or apprehending the more abstruse Theories in Philosophy.

But this peculiar Philosophical Happiness is but a very small accession to that Moral Happiness which is common to all Men, if they be

⁴¹ The quotations which follow are from *Div. Dia.*, pp. 183–185. Cf. Cudworth's declaration that “he is the best Christian, whose heart beats with the truest pulse towards heaven; not he whose head spinneth out the finest cobwebs”; that the way to heaven “is plain and easie, if we have but honest hearts: we need not many Criticisemes, many School-distinctions, to come to a right understanding of it”; and that religion does not seek “to ensnare us and intangle us with captious niceties, or to pusle our heads with deep speculations, and lead us through hard and craggie notions into the Kingdome of heaven” (*Sermon*, pp. 14–15). But see Passmore, *Cudworth*, p. 71: “Perhaps it was because he came to be somewhat uneasy lest in this sermon he had tipped the balance, always a precarious one, between humanism and pietism too far in the direction of the latter, that he chose the occasion of its dedication to make a strong plea for the encouragement of science.”

not wanting to themselves; as, To be loyal to a Man's Prince, To be true to his Religion so far as it is true, To deal faithfully with all Men, To be kind to his Neighbours, To relieve the oppressed, To be an hearty lover of God and of the whole Creation. A Man thus affected, and armed with so much Prudence as not to deny or assert any thing beyond his clear comprehension and skill in speculative matters, but to admire and adore the ineffable Wisdom of his Creator, this Man, I say, is a more complete, perfect and unexceptionable Person, and more solidly happy, than any Philosophers I know that have left their Writings to the World as a lasting Testimony of their Wit, Des-Cartes himself not excepted.

Hylobares then once again proves himself an apt pupil, concluding "that the Prudent vertuous Man is far a more noble and goodly spectacle than any Philosophical Knight-errant whatsoever."

The dominant tone is sufficiently—and distressingly—clear. Simple, practical conduct has displaced intellectual discipline from any essential position it might claim within the religious life. Observance of a pragmatic hexalogue, plus prudence *not* to indulge in "speculative matters" which may surpass one's comprehension, More declares to be sufficient for the attainment of supreme "Moral Happiness." The philosopher in search of knowledge is conceived as a "Philosophical Knight-errant." At best, he is seen as innocently engaged in decorating the human scene with an ornamentative flourish, in helping to "fitly furnish out the Stage of things." At worst, he appears to be lost in the haze of airy contemplation, quixotically combatting speculative windmills. He is thus deservedly subordinated to the "Prudent vertuous Man," whose feet are presumably more firmly entrenched upon the ground.⁴² Intellectual activity constitutes the "sport and pleasure"—but not, apparently, the business—"of life." And a strange sport, indeed, it turns out to be, one whose compensatory "price" apparently consists in the rewarding feeling of superiority to "the confident Ignorance of the rude." As religion becomes "democratic," knowledge, it would seem, becomes "aristocratic"; a rift is thus inevitably opened between the two.

⁴² It should be emphasized, however, that, as used by More, the term "prudence" is not as nearly pragmatic as it is in later usage. It appears to partake of both the Platonic-Ciceronian idealistic sense and the modern utilitarian sense.

While the duties enumerated by More are unimpeachably beyond criticism, as a general program—or, to use the political term, a “platform”—the catalogue is surely deficient; one would have expected a place to be found within it for the fulfillment of man’s—*every* man’s—intellectual nature.

The evident emphasis upon practical moral conduct may be seen as closely related to More’s democratic bias. For philosophers of ethics have tended to assume that the essence of morality must be sufficiently simple so as to lie within the grasp of all. This view is perhaps most clearly evident in theories such as that of the “moral sense” which became so dominant in eighteenth-century ethics, and which some have indeed attempted to derive, at least in part, from the Cambridge Platonists.⁴³ But the conception that the field of ethics is the domain of the common man is by no means peculiar to Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and their benevolist followers. “As to this simplicity [of conduct],” said Arnold, “all moralists are agreed”;⁴⁴ and even so philosophically—and, in a very real sense, aristocratically—minded a thinker as Kant, hesitates before embarking upon the exposition of a *theory* of ethics. For, “es also keiner Wissenschaft und Philosophie bedürfe, um zu wissen, was man zu tun habe, um ehrlich und gut, ja sogar weise und tugendhaft zu sein. Das liesse sich auch wohl schon zum voraus vermuten, das die Kenntniss dessen, was zu tun, mithin auch zu wissen jedem Menschen obliegt, auch jedes, selbst des gemeinsten Menschen Sache sein werde.”⁴⁵ Universally obligatory, even upon the commonest of men, “selbst des gemeinsten Menschen,” and hence, force perforce, easily knowable without “Wissenschaft und Philosophie,” without any

⁴³ For discussions of the theory, see James Bonar, *Moral Sense* (London, 1930); D. D. Raphael, *The Moral Sense* (Oxford, 1947); and Hastings Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1924), I, 139–177. Its development during the second half of the seventeenth century is discussed by R. S. Crane, “Suggestions toward a Genealogy of the ‘Man of Feeling,’” *ELH* 1 (1934), 205–230, and Michael Macklem, *The Anatomy of the World: Relations between Natural and Moral Law from Donne to Pope* (Minneapolis, 1958), pp. 82–90. Macklem, pp. 82–83, makes specific reference to More; but cf. Sorley, *History of Philosophy*, p. 121.

⁴⁴ Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma* (New York, 1895), p. 16.

⁴⁵ *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, ed. A. Buchenau and E. Cassirer, in *Werke*, ed. E. Cassirer et al. (Berlin, 1912–16), IV, 260.

scholarly or philosophic endeavor—here is the crux of the presumed simplicity of ethics.

The contention that the principles of ethics may be easily apprehended by all is one which More would certainly have endorsed emphatically. "For what is just and unjust," he writes, "good and evil, amiable and execrable, is more palpable and plain, according to the judgement of some, then the Existence of a Deity,"⁴⁶ and More certainly considered "the Existence of a Deity" plain enough. When More commended "plaine and practicall sermons" to Lady Conway, the two epithets were very likely not unrelated in his mind. The sermons are plain because practical and practical because plain. His desire for a simple religion thus naturally led More to emphasize ethical conduct further and further. Not that his strong moral tone is merely the result of his pitching upon morality as an element which might meet the requirement of universality. There is nothing synthetic about More's ethical passion. His ardor for right personal and social conduct is firmly rooted in his deepest nature, is of the very pith and marrow of his soul. But the *dominant* role he assigned to morality often—particularly in the *Divine Dialogues*—is a direct consequence of its being applicable and available to all. "Moral Happiness" is universal, "Philosophical Happiness" parochial, and it is therefore with the former that religion must cast its lot.

Allied to More's "democratic" concern for popular religion, is a second consideration, equally urging the simplicity of religion. I refer to More's advocacy of toleration. This aspect of his thought has been widely discussed by students of More—too thoroughly, one suspects. The picture of More as a knight in shining armor, fighting the battle of religious liberty, lacks both focus and perspective. There is, indeed, no doubt of his latitudinarian sympathies. But he is hardly the great champion of individual liberty nor quite the ardent advocate of religious liberalism portrayed by a number of scholars.⁴⁷ For one thing,

⁴⁶ *App. Ant. Ath.*, ix.1.

⁴⁷ An outstanding example is Professor Nicolson. Typical is a sentence from her article, "George Keith and the Cambridge Platonists," *Philos. Rev.* 39 (1930): "Liberty to follow this reason, liberty to think for oneself, believe for oneself,—this is the idea which rings through the last parts of the *Mystery*

his toleration has its limits. Secondly, when seen in the proper perspective, that is, within the context of More's total activity, his writings on toleration are seen to occupy a relatively minor role. They are far less extensive and far less significant (at least, for the understanding of More) than his writings on enthusiasm or spiritualism, for instance.⁴⁸ But they are nevertheless a factor to be reckoned with in any consideration of More's thought. And to the extent that More's concern with toleration was a factor, it led him to emphasize further the need for simplifying religion, for reducing its conceptual aspect to the barest minimum possible.

More's desire for toleration sprang from a twofold motive. He was, first of all, disturbed by the mere fact of religious persecution, considered in itself. He had seen England plunged into fratricidal strife, and the results were hardly edifying. Secondly, More felt that—quite apart from its own intrinsic evil—persecution was bad in that it diverted men from the proper concern of true religion—from the quest for deiformity. For the cure of both evils, More turned—as have countless thinkers, before and after him—to the distinction between fundamental and nonfunda-

of *Godliness*, becoming in More's hands, as in Milton's, a trumpet which sang [sic] to battle" (pp. 40-41). The statement seems rather exaggerated; certainly its tone is somewhat misleading. I think Miss Nicolson makes the further error of treating More as an advocate of religious liberty—"liberty to question, liberty to doubt, liberty to believe; tolerance to interpret and comprehend" (MP 27 [1929], 47). Actually, even to the limited extent that More was preoccupied with latitudinarianism, he was an advocate of toleration, not of individual religious liberty. There is, as Tom Paine so stoutly insisted, a vast difference between the two. A similar overemphasis upon More's religious liberalism is developed at greater length in P. R. Anderson, *Science in Defense of Liberal Religion* (New York, 1933), pp. 29-44, 107-111. Somewhat better balanced, though still exaggerated, is the discussion in Colie, *Light and Enlightenment*, pp. 42-48.

⁴⁸ More's principal discussions of toleration may be found in: *Psychozoia*, ii.57-125 (a section which More added in the second edition of 1647 and which is not in the first edition of 1642); *Psychathanasia*, II.iii.1-6; *Second Lash*, pp. 276-283; *Myst. G.*, "Preface," secs. 17-29 (in the 1660 ed.; these sections were very much abbreviated in subsequent editions) and X.i-xii; *Apology*, viii-x; *Myst. I.*, II.xiv-xvi. In addition, there are of course numerous incidental references to the subject. For a summary and analysis of More's views, see W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941), IV, 123-137.

mental articles of religious belief. The former are to be maintained, while the latter may be more or less disregarded. The result, More holds, will be not a narrower, but a deeper and a purer religion. If only the essentials "were closely kept to by men, it would so fill and satisfie their souls with an inward glorious light and spirituall joy,"⁴⁹ that divisive zeal and sectarian bitterness would dissipate at once, withering in their own unworthiness. Toleration—"a mutuall agreement of bearing with one anothers dissents in the Non-fundamentals of Religion"—represents, in itself, a more truly religious attitude than any hankering after uniformity of belief, "it being an eminent act or exercise of Charity, the Flower of all Christian graces."⁵⁰ By "burthening and entangling Men's Minds with Scrupulosities in either Unnecessary or hurtful Observances and Opinions,"⁵¹ the Romanists have not only imposed upon men an unnecessary ecclesiastical bondage, they have also furthered the neglect of really necessary religious duties by placing the superfluous and the essential upon the same plane. For in the inevitably resultant competition for attention, the truly vital aspects of religion must, willy-nilly, get less than their proper share—so that a partial purge would actually purify.

That such a position reduces the importance of theological thought should be obvious. For the "essentials" are, of course, such points as are simply and clearly set forth in Scripture. "There should be no Injunctions," More tells his Catholic opponents, "as indispensable in matters of Religion, but such as they [the books of the Bible] plainly determine."⁵² With reference to his own practice, More tells us that, in writing his *Mystery of Godliness*, he avoided acute discussions of theological problems, but rather concentrated upon acknowledged fundamentals—"I having adventured there to determine none of the more nice and intricate Opinions of Theology, but kept my self within the bounds of the confessed Truth of our Religion."⁵³ The need for the exercise of reason is thus greatly minimized. Little religious knowledge is necessary, and what little one does need to know

⁴⁹ *Second Lash*, p. 251.

⁵¹ *Myst. I.*, I.xvii.1.

⁵³ *Myst. G.*, "Preface," sec. 10.

⁵⁰ *Myst. G.*, "Preface," sec. 29.

⁵² *Myst. G.*, V.xvii.8.

he can learn with ease—he has, indeed, probably already learned. Attention is thus focused instead upon the cultivation of the will and its practical manifestation in right conduct. In particular, the emphasis falls quite naturally upon moral conduct. For—partly because it does not engage the emotions so keenly, partly because greater unanimity prevails regarding its principles—morality has never stirred such controversy as has surrounded religion. Even seemingly minor points of ritual or dogma may embroil religionists in acrimonious debate, may even lead to bloodshed. Few, however, would go to war to prove an ethical point or even to right a moral wrong. The interests of peace and harmony are consequently better served by an emphasis upon practical moral conduct.

III

As was noted at the opening of the chapter, reservations with respect to the quest for knowledge were, in the seventeenth century, hardly restricted to a particular circle. Various motivated, coming from different directions, and assuming a number of forms, expressions of suspicion of intellectual endeavor were fairly widespread in the period. Statements that knowledge is dangerous or unnecessary, that excessive “curiosity” may corrupt or bring to grief, are almost commonplace. One often encounters, furthermore, a variety of attitudes within a single writer. Much depended upon the type of knowledge under discussion. “Curiosity” was, with almost all shades of thinkers, a handy tag with which to denounce an opponent’s intellectual excursions, even while one indulged in whetting a personal intellectual appetite on a somewhat different diet. Or there might take place a change of attitude in the course of the development of a single religious thinker. Most familiar is the example of Milton, who, although he certainly never adopted the obscurantism some of his modern critics so eagerly seek in his later works, nevertheless shifted his emphasis as he grew older. Moving from the exuberant enthusiasm of the encomium on knowledge in the “Seventh Prolusion” through the firm confidence of the *Areopagitica* to the cautious restraint and downright suspicion of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, one senses a degree of vacillation, possibly, but cer-

tainly, a marked change of atmosphere.⁵⁴ More's attitude is hardly unique, then, although in view of the emphasis upon reason on one side of him, his minimizing it from another aspect is of singular interest, and worthy of special notice.

Where the climate of opinion was so charged with accents of anti-intellectualism, it may seem foolhardy to attempt, with respect to More, to single out possible specific sources of his ambivalent attitude towards knowledge, of his emphasis upon simplicity, or of his concern with practical conduct. And yet, with an eye upon his multifarious interests, one may usefully point out a number of particular channels through which currents of anti-intellectualism may have reached More. For More's emphasis upon simplicity may be seen as reflecting a number of convergent influences. It is, first of all, one element of the central European humanistic tradition. Erasmus,⁵⁵ unquestionably the most influential figure in that tradition, asserts repeatedly that simple practical ethics rather than abstruse speculation constitutes the essence of the religious life, and this view—already widespread before Erasmus—subsequently gained prevalent currency in humanistic circles. Symptomatic is the generally hostile attitude towards the Schoolmen—fully shared by More⁵⁶—which, while partly based upon repulsion at their “barbarous” unclassical

⁵⁴ Milton's attitude has been discussed in a large literature, the fullest treatment probably being that of Schultz, *Milton and Forbidden Knowledge*, passim. The book is replete with references to the Cambridge Platonists, who come under special discussion in ch. iv, “The Peacemakers' Modesty,” pp. 157–183.

⁵⁵ It might be noted that a translation of Erasmus' *Colloquies* by “H. M. Gent.,” appeared in London in 1671. The *CBEL* conjectures that H. M. is either Henry Munday or Henry More. I must confess, however, that I am rather inclined to doubt that More was the translator. See also Hartlib's letter to Worthington: “Mr. More I conceive would do incomparably Erasmus' *Paraphrase* [of the Bible], after he has done with his own work” (in Worthington, *Diary and Correspondence*, I, 172; January 30, 1659/60). More never undertook this translation, however.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., the satirical portrait of Graculo, who knew “All the nice questions of the School-men old / And subtilties as thin as cobwebs bet” (*Psychozoia*, ii.76), the reference to “rotten rolls of school antiquity” (*Democritus Platonissans*, stanza 9), or More's complaint of the tediousness of “old scholastick Metaphysical Notions” (January 10, 1674, *Con. L.*, p. 385). In a sharper vein, he points out “what sophistical Knots and Nooses, fruitless subtilties and niceties, what gross contradictions and inconsistencies the Schoolmen and Polemical Divines have filled the World with” (*Myst. G.*, V.xiv.7). Occasionally, More takes opponents to task for employing

Latin, derives principally from a distaste for all abstract, minute, and rigorous thought, or, as some would prefer to call it, "logic-chopping." Via the broad humanistic highway⁵⁷ and through the byway of Arminianism⁵⁸—not to mention such stations as Castellio or Acontius—the Erasmian view passed into seventeenth-century England, where it found expression in various circles—most notably at Great Tew⁵⁹ and Cambridge—as well as through eminent individual writers such as Jeremy Taylor⁶⁰ or (from a very different aspect) Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Scholastic methods or ideas. Thus, he berated Baxter for disputing "like a bold Scholastick Champion or Polemick Divine" ("The Digression," inserted in *Annotations*, p. 185), and accused Hobbes, of all people, of being tainted with Scholastic "fooleries in talking of Faculties and Operations (and the absurditie is alike in both) as separate and distinct from the Essence they belong to" (*Imm. Soul*, II.iii.8).

⁵⁷ On the humanists' opposition to pure abstract contemplation and their general preference for the active and pragmatic idea, see E. F. Rice's scholarly and perceptive study, *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), especially pp. 30–58 and 149–207. Rice points out that the Florentine Platonists did defend the intellectual ideal somewhat (pp. 59–92), but I think that, on the whole, the influence of Renaissance humanism certainly strengthened More's anti-intellectual tendencies.

⁵⁸ The relation of Dutch Arminianism to Cambridge Platonism is most fully discussed in Colie, *Light and Enlightenment*, passim. J. A. Stewart (*Encyc. of Religion and Ethics*, III, 169–170), considered Dutch Arminianism one of the two fountainheads of Cambridge Platonism (the other being Florentine Platonism), but I think one must rather agree with the statement of A. W. Harrison that "if we find any kinship between the Remonstrants of Holland and the Cambridge Platonists, it is not because of the common influence of Arminius upon both schools. Where the Cambridge men accepted Arminian views they had arrived at them independently" (*Arminianism*, p. 168). When Tuckney accused Whichcote of having trodden "in the Arminians' steps" ("Eight Letters," p. 28), Whichcote replied that he had previously never even heard of the *Apologia Remonstratum*, much less read it (p. 53). Similarly, with respect to More, I find no palpable evidence that he read the Arminians themselves during his formative period. In his later years, he did, as Miss Colie points out, maintain contact with Limborch and other Dutch Arminians. But the earliest letters she mentions date from the early 1660's, by which time the cast of More's religious thought was pretty well fixed. The indications are that the Platonists and the Arminians had been moving along parallel paths, and then, seeing that they were heading towards the same destination, joined hands to make common cause.

⁵⁹ On the Great Tew group—Falkland, Hales, Chillingworth—see Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, I, 76–343, and K. B. Murdock, *The Sun at Noon* (New York, 1939), pp. 98–138.

⁶⁰ See T. G. Steffan, "Jeremy Taylor's Criticism of Abstract Speculation," *Studies in English*, no. 4026 (Austin, 1940), 96–108.

Secondly, one must consider the Cartesian influence. Descartes is, to be sure, generally regarded as the high-priest, if not indeed, the patron saint, of rationalism. Historians of science have, as a matter of fact, often charged him with being *too* rationalistic, with failing to pay sufficient heed to inductive experiment and objective fact.⁶¹ Such a criticism applies only to Descartes' ratiocinative procedure, however. But the basis of thought, it will be remembered, he held to be "clear and distinct ideas." Even while he himself emphasized the need for reasoning *from* these ideas, in positing clarity as a criterion of truth, he was contributing to the tendency to see truth as easily accessible. The Cartesian influence on this point is clearly discernible in More's earlier works, written while his admiration for Descartes was at its zenith. "The Fundamentals of Science," More tells Thomas Vaughan, "should be certain, plain, reall, and perspicuous to reason."⁶² What he says here of "the Fundamentals of Science," that is, its premises, More repeats elsewhere of the method of philosophic thought. In the preface to the heavily Cartesian *Antidote against Atheism*, he speaks of the work as being dominated by "sound and plain Reason, and an easie and clear Method."⁶³ And he emphasizes that, in developing his thesis, he has taken care not to venture too far afield: "And I found, that keeping myself within so narrow a compass, as not to affect any Reasonings but such as had very clear affinity and close connexion with the Subject in hand, I naturally hit upon whatever was material to my purpose."⁶⁴ In his writings, More did not always adhere scrupulously to this procedure (neither did Descartes, for that matter), although in a number of his works, notably the *Immortality of the Soul* and the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, he did present sets of simple axioms in terms of which their respective problems are said to be easily and immediately soluble. But the mere fact that in theory at least, clarity was held up as a mark of truth, in-

⁶¹ The charge is at least as old as Isaac Barrow's college oration of 1659; see *Theological Works*, IX, 87; quoted in translation in P. H. Osmond, *Isaac Barrow: His Life and Times* (London, 1944), pp. 30-31. See also J. B. Mullinger, *Cambridge Characteristics*, pp. 114-117, and Herbert Butterfield, *Origins of Modern Science, 1300-1800* (London, 1949), pp. 84-100.

⁶² *Observations*, p. 90.

⁶³ *Ant. Ath.* "The Preface," sec. 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 5.

evitably reinforced More's emphasis upon the essential simplicity of religion.⁶⁵

One is indeed tempted to see a further Cartesian influence, one which might relate to the specific problem of the nature of theological truth. For it will be recalled that Descartes, like More, touched upon the "democratic" question of the suitability of religion, and particularly theology, for the masses. In the opening pages of the *Discours de la méthode*, he declares that since, force perforce, religious truth must be as accessible to the ignorant as to the wise, its acquisition could not in any way be dependent upon the exercise of human reason. Consequently, he had, in youth, rejected it as a possible field of study:

Je reverois nostre Theologie, et pretendois, autant qu'aucun autre, a gaigner le ciel; mais ayant appris comme chose tres assurée, que le chemin n'en est pas moins ouuert aux plus ignorans qu'aux plus doctes, et que les veritez reuelées, qui y conduisent, sont au dessus de nostre intelligence, ie n'eusse osé les soumettre a la foiblesse de mes raisonnemens, et ie pensois que, pour entreprendre de les examiner et y reussir, il estoit besoin d'auoir quelque extraordinaire assistance du ciel, et d'estre plus qu'homme.⁶⁶

In a letter to Burman, he is even sharper:

It is by their Scholastic theology, that the monks have given rise to all the sects and heresies—by that Scholastic theology which, above all, must be swept away, *ante omnia exterminanda*. And what need is there for so much bother, since we see the illiterates and the peasants, *idiotas ac rusticos*, as well able to get to heaven as we are? That should be a warning to us that it is infinitely preferable to have a theology as simple as they, rather than to twist it by a flock of controversies, and thus corrupt it, and give occasion for disputes, quarrels, wars, and other calamities.⁶⁷

The positions of More and Descartes are totally dissimilar, however. For, as Maritain⁶⁸ pointed out, in Descartes, the simplicity

⁶⁵ On Descartes' influence upon More with respect to clarity and plainness, see Craig, "Umbra Dei," ch. 6.

⁶⁶ In *Oeuvres*, VI, 8.

⁶⁷ Quoted and translated in Jacques Maritain, *The Dream of Descartes and Other Essays*, trans. M. L. Andison (London, 1946), p. 64. The original Latin letter is in *Oeuvres*, V, 176.

⁶⁸ See pp. 60–64. For a discussion of French fideism in the first half of the seventeenth century, see Henri Busson, *La pensée religieuse française de Charron à Pascal* (Paris, 1933). Of special relevance to our subject is an

of religion is asserted as one aspect of a fideistic attitude. The assertion enables Descartes to reject theology as a science, thus placing exclusive reliance upon faith (and, of course, thus releasing intellectual energies for the purposes of natural science). Descartes does not merely contend—as in the letter to Burman—that minute theological speculation is unnecessary or undesirable. He also holds—as in the passage from the *Discours*—that it is impossible; human reason has no place in the development of religious thought.

More, however, sees reason as fully capable of participating in the quest for truth; for him, there does not exist that sharp dichotomy between religious and scientific truth which pervades Descartes' thought. Occasionally, More may comment upon human frailty: "The greatest strength of a man is weaknesse, and the power of Reason, while we are in this state, depends so much upon the organs of the body, that its force is very uncertain and fickle. Is not the whole consistency of the body of Man, as a crudled cloud or coagulated vapour? and his Personality a walking shadow and dark imposture?"⁶⁹ Such a passage is atypical, however. More is, after all, heir to the humanistic conception of the dignity of man, and, by and large, he has confidence in the ability of human reason to apprehend religious truth. His position is rather that the quest for theological knowledge is, at least for the generality of men, unnecessary. The main business of religion consists rather in conduct, and right conduct may be achieved with relatively little intellectual effort. Its attainment is thus within reach of all. Above and beyond it, the study of theology—whose claim to rank as a science, More does *not* deny, does, indeed, affirm—may be undertaken by the select few whose interests and abilities make its successful pursuit feasible.

And there is, finally, a second important difference, a difference in motive. Descartes assumed the simplicity (or—what in the circumstances has the same consequences—the insuperable difficulty) of religious knowledge by way of denying the possibility of a theological science, and thus diverting all intellectual

interesting article by W. H. Barber, "Pierre Bayle: Faith and Reason," in *The French Mind: Studies in Honour of Gustave Rudler* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 109–125.

⁶⁹ *Second Lash*, p. 209.

endeavor to the physical sciences.⁷⁰ More, however, proclaimed the simplicity of religious knowledge only to direct attention to what he considered the essence of religion itself—to moral conduct, to firm belief, to spiritual regeneration. Descartes reasoned that, religion being simple, it could be taken for granted, and one could henceforth move on to other matters. More reasoned that religion was a matter never to be gotten away from, and that precisely for this reason one must predicate its simplicity—so that all could attend to it, and attend to it better:

My onely solicitude therefore was to corroborate that Faith that is plainly propounded to us out of the Scripture, which is sufficient to Salvation, and to exalt that Life which has lyen dead and buried for these so many Ages under a vast heap of humane Inventions, useless and cumbersome Ceremonies and unpeaceable Opinions.⁷¹

Tending towards simplicity from the opposite direction may have been the influence of rising contemporary science. We may consider this influence under two aspects. There is, first, the question of methodology. Historians of modern science have indeed generally agreed with Kant⁷² that its method has been based upon some sort of balance—or better said, of fusion—of

⁷⁰ Descartes' attitude thus resembles that of numerous Baconians, a comparison with whom might be instructive. Cf. D. C. Allen, *The Legend of Noah* (Urbana, Ill., 1949), p. 22: "Thus Descartes sides with a long line of prelates who have advised against inquiring into the secrets of God; but when he sides with them he banishes teleology from his system of thought and unlocks the handcuffs that Christian theology had placed on men. Since we know that we are finite, let us study the finite world."

⁷¹ *Myst. G.*, "Preface," sec. 20.

⁷² See the preface to the second edition of his *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, ed. Albert Gorland, in *Werke*, III. Kant argues that the great scientific advances after 1600 resulted, not from the discovery of experimentation, but from the discovery that experiments must be conducted on the basis of a prior hypothesis. "Sie [i.e., seventeenth-century scientists] begriffen, dass die Vernunft nur das einsieht, was sie selbst nach ihrem entwurfe hervorbringt; dass sie mit Prinzipien ihrer Urtheile nach beständigen Gesetzen vorangehen und die Natur nötigen müsse, auf ihre Fragen zu antworten, nicht aber sich von ihr allein gleichsam am Leitbände gängeln lassen müsse . . . Die Vernunft muss, mit ihren Prinzipien, nach denen allein übereinkommende Erscheinungen für Gesetze gelten können, in einer Hand und mit dem Experiment, das sie nach jenen ausdachte, in der anderen, an die Natur gehen, zwar um von ihr belehrt zu werden, aber nicht in der Qualität eines Schülers, der sich alles vorsagen lässt, was der Lehrer will, sondern eines bestellten Richters, der die Zeugen nötigt, auf die Fragen zu antworten, die er ihnen vorlegt" ("Vorrede zur zweiten Auflage," III, 16).

rationalism and empiricism. Bacon himself indicated as much in the famous passage comparing the spider, the ant, and the bee in the *Novum Organum*; quoting which, C. D. Broad aptly comments: "True and faithful science must combine rationalism with empiricism, and be like the bee who gathers materials from every flower and then works them up by her own activities into honey. This marriage between rationalism and empiricism, and this discovery of a new method, are the tasks which Bacon set before himself."⁷³ Nevertheless, I do not think one can seriously challenge Whitehead's famous thesis that, in its historical context, the new science represented—as did, for instance, Hippocratic medicine in fifth-century Greece—a revolt against excessive reliance upon ratiocination.⁷⁴ To refer to Bacon again, there springs to mind the passage in *The Advancement of Learning* in which he complains that "men have withdrawn themselves too much from the contemplation of nature, and the observations of experience, and have tumbled up and down in their own reason and conceits. Upon these intellectualists, which are notwithstanding commonly taken for the most sublime and divine philosophers, Heraclitus gave a just censure, saying, 'Men sought truth in their own little worlds, and not in the great and common world.'" ⁷⁵ The new science is thus rather to be seen as an anti-intellectual—or, if you will, an anti-intellectualistic—force. That More was influenced by contemporary experimental science goes without saying. About Bacon himself he appears to have had some misgivings. Except for stray references to the *Essays* and a commendation of *Sapientia Veterum* one does not encounter his name in More's pages, and C. E. Raven cites a manuscript letter in

⁷³ "The Philosophy of Francis Bacon," in *Ethics and the History of Philosophy* (London, 1952), pp. 119–120. See also Butterfield, *Origins*, pp. 69–96; W. C. D. Dampier-Whetham, *A History of Science and Its Relation with Philosophy and Religion* (Cambridge, Eng., 1931), pp. 181–183.

⁷⁴ See his *Science and the Modern World*, ch. i; also Dampier-Whetham, pp. 141–142, and Walter Pagel, "Religious Motives in the Medical Biology of the Seventeenth Century," *Bull. of the Inst. of the Hist. of Medicine*, III (1935), 98, 110–112, and 111n. See also H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (Edinburgh, 1951), pp. 188–189, and Benjamin Farrington, *Greek Science* (London, 1951), pp. 66–78.

⁷⁵ Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (London, 1950), p. 33.

which "Henry More, though Hartlib urges him to the study of Bacon, replies with an evident lack of enthusiasm for his writings."⁷⁶ But he was nevertheless a member of the Royal Society, and came into direct personal contact with a number of eminent Baconians. Probably his closest associate was Joseph Glanvill, whose *Vanity of Dogmatizing* is one long diatribe against excessive ratiocinative speculation.⁷⁷ Another close friend was Robert Boyle, one of the most famous "ants" in the annals of science, a man who was already criticized by Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Huygens⁷⁸ for having conducted and recorded endless experiments without drawing numerous significant conclusions from them. And it is noteworthy that, in a letter to Boyle, More takes note of the criticism but sides with his friend: "Sir, you will infinitely oblige posterity, by the records of your so faithful and multifarious experiments which you have transmitted to them in your severall writings. They certainly are of far greater consequence, as your last has but justly taken notice, than the

⁷⁶ *Natural Religion and Christian Theology* (Cambridge, Eng., 1953), I, 108. The letter is dated August 27, 1649. On Bacon's influence upon More with respect to plainness, see Craig, "Umbra Dei," ch. v.

⁷⁷ With specific reference to religion, Glanvill wrote that "Real Philosophy," i.e., science, aids religion in that it causes men to disdain "the uncertainty of Speculation," and to esteem "Operative knowledge" instead, "which disposition will incline us also to have less regard to Nicities in Religion, and teach us to lay out our chief Cares and Endeavours about Practical and certain Knowledge, which will assist and promote our Vertue, and our Happiness; and incline us to imploy our selves in living according to it; And this also will be an effectual means to destroy the Humour of Contending . . . It [i.e., "Real Philosophy"] inclines Men to place the Essential Principles of Religion only in the plain, and certain Articles. For Philosophers are disposed to think, that Certainty is in a little room" ("The Usefulness of Real Philosophy to Religion," in *Essays in Philosophy and Religion*, p. 25). With respect to his *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, it should be emphasized, however, that—especially in the later editions—Glanvill was not merely indulging in Pyrrhonic skepticism. He was only attacking *excessive* speculation. He did, however, admit the possibility of certainty in both religion and mathematics. His principal aim, furthermore, was probably the rebuttal of the enthusiasts with their inordinate confidence in the certainty of subjective revelations. See R. H. Popkin, "Joseph Glanvill: A Precursor of David Hume," *JHI* 14 (1953), 296, and Jackson I. Cope, "Joseph Glanvill, Anglican Apologist: Old Ideas and New Style in the Restoration," *PMLA* 69 (1954), 230-237.

⁷⁸ See Butterfield, *Origins*, p. 113; Marie Boas, "The Establishment of the Mechanical Philosophy," *Ostris* 10 (1952), 414 and 503-504; and M. S. Fisher, *Robert Boyle, Devout Naturalist* (Philadelphia, 1945), p. 50.

framing of any hasty hypotheses, though witty, and within some circuit of considerations, pretty coherent."⁷⁹

Secondly, the scientific influence was of course one of the prime factors leading to the post-Restoration enthronement of clarity and simplicity as ideals of the highest order. With its passion for plainness, its search for precision, its disdain for subtlety, and its mistrust of imagination, science was instrumental in helping to introduce a pervasive emphasis upon simplicity in virtually all walks of life, at least of cultural life.⁸⁰ And of course in thinking of an intellectual religion, stressing rational endeavor versus a practical religion, stressing moral conduct, we should not for a moment forget the utilitarian bias which was so dominant in much seventeenth-century thought, particularly in its later phases. This bias was, needless to say, closely connected with the new science. Even when we have allowed for the considerable exaggeration of Macaulay's famous essay, we cannot but agree with him that the advancement of utility—"enlarging the bounds of human empire"—was one of the principal aims of Bacon and his followers. The scientific movement thus tended to emphasize pragmatic action to the disparagement of purely abstract speculation, particularly in the religious realm, where neither short-nor long-range "fruit" could be expected.⁸¹

⁷⁹ June 5, 1665, *Con. L.*, pp. 240-241.

⁸⁰ The influence of science upon the development of plain style has been discussed by J. I. Cope, *Joseph Glanvill: Anglican Apologist* (St. Louis, 1956), pp. 144-166; L. C. Knights, "Bacon and the Dissociation of Sensibility," in *Explorations* (London, 1946), pp. 92-111; R. F. Jones, in essays collected in *The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope* by R. F. Jones and Others Writing in His Honor (Stanford, Calif., 1951); George Williamson, *The Senecan Amble* (Chicago, 1951), pp. 275-300; and, with specific reference to More, by Craig, "Umbra Dei," passim. A special aspect of the influence of science upon More's language is treated in M. H. Nicolson, *The Breaking of the Circle: Studies in the Effect of the New Science upon Seventeenth Century Poetry* (Evanston, Ill., 1950), pp. 138-145. See also Harold Fisch, "The Puritans and the Reform of Prose-Style," *ELH* 19 (1952), 246, who argues that the Platonists helped bring about a plainer style. In support, he quotes Burnet's statement that if he has been able to arrive "at any faculty of writing clear and correctly," he owed it entirely to them.

⁸¹ See R. F. Jones, *Ancients and Moderns: A Study of the Background of the Battle of the Books* (St. Louis, 1936), and Robert K. Merton, "Science, Technology, and Society in Seventeenth Century England," *Osiris* 4 (1938),

A fourth factor is not so much an influence as an inheritance. More, let us remember, is an Englishman, an Englishman, furthermore, who—except for a single brief visit to France—spent his entire life within the confines of the British Isles. Born and bred in the heart of Lincolnshire, schooled at Eton, rooted in Cambridge, More—man and boy—had ample occasion to absorb the English temper. It is a temper, of course, which has traditionally had an almost notorious aversion for rigorous abstract speculation. Empirically bent, governed by a robust common sense, so fond of compromise, content—at times, one exasperatedly feels, almost *intent*—to “muddle through,” finding—as Arnold noted to his chagrin—nothing objectionable in an anomaly—such has been the essential British character. The practical bent which has rejected, in turn, the extremes of Ciceronianism, primitivism, atonality, and surrealism; which has accepted an Elizabethan Settlement, developed a socialistic monarchy, and defied the logic of the metric system; which mitigated, successively, the excesses of French neoclassicism, romanticism, naturalism, and symbolism; which shied away from German theology in the sixteenth century and from German metaphysics in the nineteenth—this bent was already fully developed in More’s day, there for him to imbibe and transmit. One cannot but suspect that More’s anti-intellectual aspect, that side of him which is singularly unsympathetic to purely abstract speculation, is, in part, a native heritage.

Finally, we have to consider the Neoplatonic influence, with its emphasis upon unity, and its message of *haploson seauton*, “Simplify your self, Reduce your self to One.” Taken in itself, such a dictum need not constitute any anti-intellectual tendency; unity may result from comprehension as well as from exclusion. But the dictum certainly *can* be given such a bias, particularly by a thinker already so predisposed. More, at any rate, would appear to have done so. After quoting the maxim, he continues: “I think no man is born naturally so stupid, but that he will keep close to this single Light of divine Love, in due time; nay, in a short time he will be no more to seek what is to be done in the

419–470. Due to Weber’s strong influence, however, Merton has greatly overexaggerated the utilitarian element in Puritanism.

carriage of his Life to God or man, than an unblemished Eye will be at a loss to distinguish colours.”⁸² “In due time; nay, in a short time”—we are reminded once again of that “so short a cut” of which More was later to speak in the *Divine Dialogues*. Sincerity and single-minded dedication are presumed to be sufficient, intellectual discipline superfluous. And where moral regeneration has been attained, further intellectual effort is deemed unnecessary; one may then trust to “doing what comes naturally.”

An effortless, natural virtue is, from one point of view, certainly a very noble ideal. Pascal, to be sure, would rejoin that “la plus cruelle guerre que Dieu puisse faire aux hommes en cette vie est de les laisser sans cette guerre qu’il est venue apporter,”⁸³ and innumerable moralists might insist that struggling effort must be a constant coefficient of moral action. These objections we may for the moment dismiss, however; they would certainly have carried little weight with thinkers who saw deformity as their goal and who felt that it could, for the most part, be achieved in this life; or who held, for instance, as we shall see, that free will, while a fact, was more of a blemish than a perfection. But what one cannot dismiss so easily is the feeling that, first, such a state can hardly be attained, if at all, “in a short time”; that, secondly, man’s intellectual nature must be an active participant in the quest for deformity; and that, finally, More has here forgotten what Plotinus knew so well, that even after the eye has become sunlike, it must still “strain, and see.”⁸⁴ Surely Matthew Arnold would have complained that More’s “single Light” was somewhat lacking in luminosity. And that, in brief, is the criticism one is inclined to make of this second aspect of More’s religious outlook.

IV

At this point, the reader may very justifiably ask how More’s two conflicting aspects are to be reconciled, or better asked, how they *were* reconciled by More himself. The question is as simple as it is important, but the answer is necessarily more complex.

⁸² “Defence,” i.13.

⁸³ *Pensées* (Paris: Hachette, 1950), p. 170, no. 498.

⁸⁴ *Enneads*, 1.6.9.

And it should be said at once that I do not think they really were fully reconciled or reconcilable. The two tendencies of his thought—that which sees the intellect and the will in harmony and that which sees them in conflict; that which considers knowledge almost indispensable and that which considers it relatively superfluous—coexisted in alternate ascendancy, each an integral aspect of More's mind. This is not to say that More himself was troubled by incessant inner struggles. Certainly the last forty-five years of his life—covering the entire span of his career as an author—show every sign of having been spent in spiritual calm. Nor do I think More was the victim of self-delusion. But one simply feels in reading him that the two attitudes each exerted a definite hold upon him, and each in turn found expression in his works. His moral sensitivity was so keen and it became at times so overpowering as to demand the deposition of any and every potential rival. The first victim—precisely because More *was* so attached to it—was intellectual endeavor, the search for knowledge. Both attitudes therefore give vent to what is in every sense a very real part of More. Consideration of a number of factors will enable us to mitigate the sharpness of the dualism somewhat. At bottom, however, its existence must be recognized. To “combine” or relate its components in some sort of false *objective* unity would be futile. Instead of attempting to dismiss the dichotomy, let us rather seek to understand it, to see what underlies the *subjective* unity of such disparate attitudes. In part, we must explain, in part, explain away. But when all is said and done, we must, heeding Descartes, remember where to stop, and remember that we shall not have accounted for More's dichotomy completely.

To an extent, More's apparent dualism is the result of a relatively extrinsic factor. I refer to his extensive polemic activity. His large-scale battles—against Romanists on the right and enthusiasts on the left—need hardly be mentioned. In addition, however, he was engaged in a number of more or less personal skirmishes. His earliest such controversy, that with Thomas Vaughan, has already been noted. In his middle years, he wrote a lengthy *Apology* (1664) defending the orthodoxy of his *Mystery of Godliness* against charges hurled in Joseph Beaumont's

Objections. In his later years, he was engaged in further controversy (albeit friendly) with Matthew Hale—Baxter's great friend—over the "principium Hylarchium" and hydrostatics, and with Baxter himself over spiritualistic beliefs. And of course we have not yet included his later attacks upon Descartes, his criticism of Boyle in the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, or the brief Latin tracts he wrote against Spinoza and against Jacob Boehme.⁸⁵ A born polemicist indeed! He is forever anticipating objections, forestalling opponents, and—despite an avowed distaste for writing—constantly adding innumerable scholia and appendices to his works, often in reply to critics. Virtually all his major works—the *Enchiridion Ethicum* is perhaps the sole exception—are permeated by a polemic tone. Even in the midst of the deeply personal autobiography included in the "Praefatio Generalissima" to the Latin edition of his *Opera Omnia*, More could not forget his role as a public advocate of the theory of "innate ideas"; and, refusing to omit an opportunity to adduce some evidence—and first-hand evidence at that—he digressed from his narrative to insist that his early belief in Providence was due to "an internal Sensation" rather than to either environment or heredity.⁸⁶ More, it might be added, is not only polemic but forensic. He is not merely a man engaged in cloistered academic disputes, but a public champion defending religious and philosophic positions in the general interest. Ward regarded him, he tells us, as a sort of Elias, "sent particularly in these latter Ages of the World, to promote the most useful Truths, whether in Philosophy or

⁸⁵ On More's controversy with Baxter, see the latter's *Of the Nature of Spirits; Especially Mans Soul. In a Placid Collation with the Learned Dr. Henry More* (London, 1682), and More's reply—delivered almost immediately—in the lengthy "Digression" inserted in his *Annotations*, pp. 180–246. On his attitude towards Descartes see pp. 169–170 and n.; and, on his differences with Boyle, the latter's *An Hydrostatical Discourse Occasioned by the Objections of the Learned Dr. Henry More*, in *Works*, III, 596–628. More's tracts against Spinoza—after 1670, mentioned fairly often both in More's correspondence and in his published works—were included in the second volume of his *Opera Omnia*; for an account of More's attitude towards Spinoza and Spinozism, see Colie, *Light and Enlightenment*, pp. 66–116. As to Boehme and Behmenism, numerous references to them are scattered throughout More's works and letters. In 1670, More published anonymously his *Philosophae Teutonicae Censura* in criticism of Boehme.

⁸⁶ See the lengthy passage quoted in translation in Ward, *Life*, pp. 7–8.

Theology; to help to purify the Age in which we Live, and prepare it for the better Times expected.”⁸⁷ And his forensic, almost missionary, character is one of which More was fully conscious. In the very midst of controversy, he makes his attitude explicit. In the “Preface to the Reader” prefixed to *The Second Lash of Alazonomastix* he defends himself against possible charges of meddling in others’ private affairs. The conception that each should mind his own store is entirely wrong: “It doth not follow, Though this be the mode, that therefore it is the right fashion: and ‘Quando ego non curo tuum, ne cura meum,’ is but surlily said of the old man in the Comedy. That’s the principle of Cain, ‘Am I my brothers keeper?’”⁸⁸ Cain’s day of Romantic glorification is yet to come; More ranges himself rather with the angels on the side of Abel and social responsibility.

The nature and extent of More’s polemic activity are, for our purposes, significant. For it should be fairly obvious that the balance which we have seen at the heart of More’s central position is, by its very nature, delicate. By no means weak, by no means insecure, by no means superficial; but nonetheless delicate. It needs to be seen steadily and to be seen whole; where this sensitive perception is lacking it must almost inevitably disintegrate—quite literally. We have already noted that the insistence upon the conjunction of knowledge and morality can only too easily lead to the very different position that the former must be almost wholly confined to a direct concern with the latter. We may yet find that a similar transformation may affect More’s view of the relations of religion and morality. For the maintenance of More’s central position, therefore, precision and care are indispensable. But of course, as Arnold realized, it is precisely these that the circumstances of controversy preclude. Consequently, in shifting his footing to meet recurring polemical exigencies, More often came down too heavily on one foot, at times perhaps even slipped. And what gave way especially was the intellectual side of his position; indeed, if something *had* to give, this side was certainly the most expendable. More thus often came to place not only greater emphasis but greater reli-

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 35–36. See also pp. 34, 150–152, and *Div. Dia.*, p. 7.

⁸⁸ *Second Lash*, p. 162.

ance upon the unaided will, to see a "simple" religion as sufficient, and to look upon intellectual interests as something of a luxury.

Further helping us to understand the coexistence of More's two aspects is the fact that, to a degree, they are not really coexistent but rather represent successive stages in More's chronological development. While the point should not be pressed too forcibly, and while, to a limited extent, both aspects are evident throughout most of More's major works, it can hardly be gainsaid that, on the whole, the role of intellect in his religious *anschauung* tended to decline with the advance of the years. More's account of his youthful immoderate passion for knowledge and his subsequent conquest—or rather, control—of that passion, we have already seen. With these early years, however, we are not concerned, confining ourselves to the period of which we have some evidence, namely, that of More's published writings. These—with the exception of a few occasional Greek and Latin poems⁸⁹—all postdate More's spiritual crisis. Indeed, we may recall More's subsequent declaration that his first major work, *Psychozoia*, had been published in order to give an allegorical account of his earlier religious conflicts.⁹⁰

When More began writing, then, the most significant changes of his formative period—constituting of course his sharpest break with extreme intellectualism—lay behind him. Even within the subsequent decades of authorship, however, we may note a very definite, though, to be sure, less dramatic decline in the importance he attached to intellectual endeavor and the exercise of reason. In the preface to his early *Conjectura Cabbalistica* (1653), deformity is conceived primarily in terms of the intellect—"the perfecting of the Humane nature by participation of the Divine. Which cannot be understood so properly of this gross flesh and External senses, as of the Inward humanity, viz. our own Intellect, Reason, and Fancy."⁹¹ And in the body of the work, More speaks of "the more perfect and masculine Adam, which consists in pure subtile Intellectual Knowledge."⁹² In a

⁸⁹ These were printed in *Poems*, pp. 203–206.

⁹⁰ See Ward, *Life*, p. 16.

⁹¹ *Conj. Cab.*, "Preface," sec. 3.

⁹² "The Philosophick Cabbala," ii.18.

discourse which is probably early, even in the midst of a treatment of the verse, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (*Proverbs* 1:7), More injects a defense of book knowledge: "Therefore that this Discourse beget in no man a lazy, superstitious phrensie; let them be Active in good, and read such Books as conduce best for the finding of the truth of such Theories as they aim at; having always a special care that they never disjoin Knowledge from Righteousness."⁹³ In the *Divine Dialogues* (1668), however, he generally piped a different tune. We find him frequently expressing a distrust of reason—or, at least, of reasoning (often represented as being somehow sly and supersubtle)—and stressing rather the sufficiency of the purified will. In the earlier works—the *Poems*, *An Antidote against Atheism*, and *Conjectura Cabbalistica*—More generally linked the intellect and the will and contrasted both with the senses, seeking to prove "That Will and Intellect do not rely/Upon the body."⁹⁴ Now he rather tends, as we have seen, to oppose the head and the heart to each other. The change in emphasis may be significantly noted in More's very definition of piety. In the *Poems*, he tells us that he will "sing of piety: that now I mean/That Trismegist thus wisely doth define,/Knowledge of God."⁹⁵ In the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, however, piety is defined in essentially moral terms as "a sort of Justice, by which we render to God the thing which is God's; that is to say, the thing which of Right appertaineth to him."⁹⁶

More's gradual change is reflected in his conception of reason itself.⁹⁷ As Professor Nicolson briefly—and approvingly—noted,⁹⁸

⁹³ *Discourses*, pp. 116–117.

⁹⁴ *Antipsychopannychia*, i.38.

⁹⁵ *Psychathanasia*, II.iii.3.

⁹⁶ *Ench. Eth.*, II.v.1.

⁹⁷ The term reason is of course often used by the Platonists to represent not only the ratiocinative faculty—be it discursive or intuitive—but the entire rational personality, and its exercise thus involves the seizure of truth by the whole mind; and, "in vulgar use," as Whichcote parenthetically reminded Tuckney, "Mind comprehends Understanding and Will" ("Eight Letters," p. 63). Here, however, I am concerned only with the narrower sense of the term, referring to More's conception of the reasoning faculty itself.

⁹⁸ *Philos. Rev.* 39 (1930), 40: "In the *Antidote Against Atheism*, and the *Immortality of the Soul*, as well as, to some extent, in the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, reason to More, though always the chief faculty of man's nature, is largely an intellectual faculty . . . In the *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, however, reason has become more exalted. Not less intellectual, it is

the "intellectual" element became progressively less predominant. In his *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, More emphasized the discursive element:

By Reason I understand so settled and cautious a Composure of Mind as will suspect every high-flown and forward Fancy that endeavors to carry away the assent before deliberate examination; she not enduring to be gulled by the vigour or garishness of the representation, nor at all to be born down by the weight or strength of it; but patiently to try it by the known Faculties of the Soul, which are either the Common notions that all men in their wits agree upon, or the Evidence of outward Sense, or else a clear and distinct Deduction from these.⁹⁹

More goes on to speak of human reason as "Particular Reason, or Reason in Succession, or by piece-meal," reminding us of the preface to *Conjectura Cabbalistica* in which "reason in us" is described as "Ratio mobilis, or Reason in evolution, we being able to apprehend things only in a successive manner one after another"¹⁰⁰—both statements possibly echoing the Cartesian emphasis upon a chain of clear and distinct deductions. And indeed, the analytical element is again clearly emphasized in the concluding pages of More's *Defence of the Threefold Cabbala*, appended to *Conjectura Cabbalistica* only a few months after the latter's composition: "Reason is a cutting, dividing thing, like a Sword, the Stoicks call it *diaithounta logon*, dividing and distinguishing Reason. For Reason is nothing but a distinct discernment of the Idea's of things, whereby the Mind is able to sever what will not suit, and lay together what will."¹⁰¹

more highly spiritual, 'the being of the soul,' as Milton called it not long afterwards. It is that quality in man by means of which he not only distinguishes and analyzes but comprehends and synthesizes, a transcendent quality by means of which he intuitively knows and through which he savors the 'sweetness and flavor' of the good." In a footnote, Miss Nicolson sees reason in the *Mystery of Godliness* as standing midway between More's earlier "intellectual" reason and the "boniform faculty," a quality which seems sometimes to be equated with Reason, but is on the whole in More's ethics a transcendent faculty of man." Miss Nicolson feels More is moving towards a broader conception; I rather fear he developed a narrower. I am inclined to think his later view resulted from a process of exclusion instead of inclusion.

⁹⁹ *Enth. Tri.*, sec. 54.

¹⁰¹ "Defence," iii.24.

¹⁰⁰ *Conj. Cab.*, "Preface," sec. 3.

In the *Mystery of Godliness*, the discursive element is retained in More's definition of reason, "which is a Power or Faculty of the Soul, whereby either from her Innate Ideas or Common Notions, or else from the Assurance of her own Senses, or upon the Relation or Tradition of another, she unravels a further Clew of Knowledge, enlarging her Sphere of Intellectual Light, by laying open to her self the close Connexion and Cohesion of the Conceptions she has of things, whereby inferring one thing from another she is able to deduce multifarious Conclusions, as well for the pleasure of Speculation as the necessity of Practice."¹⁰² Throughout the work, however, it is evident that the intellectual element has been mitigated somewhat. Although in the course of his earlier controversy with Vaughan, More had firmly rejected Augustine's "'A Logicâ libera nos Domine,'"¹⁰³ in his *magnum opus*, a strict adherence to the rigorous processes of logic is apparently regarded rather as a mark of falsehood. As evidence of the authenticity of Scripture, More points to the fact that it is not "over-artificial and in too trim and cunning a Dress of Reason . . . How little of the Cunning Artifice of either Logick or Rhetorick they [the Scriptures] partake of, I dare appeal to any that peruse them."¹⁰⁴ From such "cunning Artifice," presumably More himself would seek liberation. The passage clearly reflects a mounting suspicion of the discursive aspect of reason.

In the *Enchiridion Ethicum* and the *Divine Dialogues*, the intuitive element becomes predominant. For the firmer outlines of More's earlier definitions of reason is substituted a comparatively nebulous conception. With respect to the *Enchiridion*, the apparent confusion regarding the relations of "right reason" and the "boniform faculty" is, in this connection, noteworthy. In the *Divine Dialogues*, the processes of discursive thought are the object of direct criticism. In the opening pages, Philopolis tells the assemblage that Hylobares has of late attempted to subvert his belief, sowing seeds of skepticism in his bosom. He has warded off the challenge successfully, however, for "all his Reasonings have seemed to me sophistical Knots or Tricks of Legerdemain, which though they might a little amuse me, yet

¹⁰² *Myst. G.*, II.xi.1.

¹⁰⁴ *Myst. G.*, VII.i.2.

¹⁰³ *Observations*, p. 129.

they could not move me at all from my settled Faith in God and his Providence." The moral is then elicited by Philotheus: "So great a firmitude is there in Life against all the subtle attacks of shifting Reason. This farther confirms me in an Observation I have made a long time ago, That there is a kind of Sanctity of Soul and Body that is of more efficacy for the receiving or retaining of Divine Truths, than the greatest pretences to Discursive Demonstration."¹⁰⁵

By many, the deprecation of "Discursive Demonstration" will, no doubt, be welcomed. Any rejection of "that false secondary power by which we multiply distinctions" in favor of a direct unified insight into truth, cannot but sound attractive. The real question, however, is not what such an appeal promises, but what it can deliver. And, as Coleridge (and, I suspect, Wordsworth himself) knew so well, we can hardly dispense with the processes of discursive and analytical thought. The secondary power becomes false only when it is falsified, that is, when it is mistaken for a primary power, or perhaps even for the *sole* power. In its proper place, however, the discursive faculty performs an invaluable and indispensable function. As Spinoza¹⁰⁶ realized, the *scientia intuitiva* can be achieved by mortal man, if at all, only as the culmination of an intensive intellectual discipline—a discipline which includes the precise exercise of a rigorous discursive *ratio*. Intuition must represent the culmination of arduous step-by-step intellectual endeavor, not a substitute for it or a short-cut around it.¹⁰⁷ To the extent that More does think of intuition as a freeway to education—and I think it is

¹⁰⁵ *Div. Dia.*, pp. 10–11.

¹⁰⁶ See *Ethics*, ii, 40, Scholium 2; and G. H. R. Parkinson, *Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 138–190.

¹⁰⁷ I am assuming the view of Prof. H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), II, 155–158, that intuition is, for Spinoza, qualitatively different from the two lower grades of knowledge (*opinio vel imaginatio* and *ratio*), but that it is nonetheless an outgrowth from them. Parkinson (pp. 181–190), however, holds that, epistemologically, there is little difference between *ratio* and *scientia intuitiva*. The difference between them he considers rather ethical, i.e., with reference to the use to which knowledge is put and the power towards freedom which it gives. On the distinction between a subrational and superrational intuition, see also Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1919), pp. 200–201.

considerable—his position must be seen as becoming less intellectual in character.

More's attitude towards theoretical scientific studies may perhaps be considered another symptom. In his *Defence of the Threefold Cabbala* More speaks of them with great enthusiasm. Having impugned the desire for knowledge in his *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, More found it necessary, in his commentary *Defence*, to clarify and qualify his position. The *libido sciendi* implicitly criticized a few months earlier (by representing the serpent as tempting Adam with knowledge), he declares, is only the desire for worldly wisdom—"to know the world . . . and gain experience." Scientific interests, on the contrary—"the accurate exercise of Reason in the knowledge of God's marvellous works in Nature"—are unquestionably praiseworthy:

The Wisdom that the Serpent here promised was not Natural Philosophy or Mathematicks, or any of those innocuous and noble accomplishments of the Understanding of man, but it was the Knowledge of the world, and the Wisdom of the flesh . . . But the free and cautious use of Reason, the Knowledge of the fabrick of the world, and the course of Natural causes, to understand the Rudiments of Geometry, and the Principles of Mechanicks, and the like; what man, that is not a Fool or a Fanatick, will ever assert that God bears any enmity to these things? For again, these kinds of Contemplations are not so properly the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as of Truth and Falshood; the Knowledge of Good and Evil referring to that experience we gather up in Moral or Political encounters.¹⁰⁸

Here, indeed—in language strikingly similar to Bacon's¹⁰⁹—More

¹⁰⁸ "Defence," iii.5–6.

¹⁰⁹ "It was not the pure knowledge of nature and universality . . . which gave occasion to the fall: but it was the proud knowledge of good and evil, with an intent in man to give law unto himself, and to depend no more upon God's commandments, which was the form of the temptation" (*Advancement*, pp. 4–5). Subsequently, Bacon more specifically declares that the fall was caused by the attempt to find a *reason* for divine prohibitions, i.e., to see them as rooted not in God's will but in an "eternal and immutable morality," with the result that obedience to them might be viewed as obedience to a moral law conceived as existing independently of God rather than to the divine will—precisely the position which, to an extent, is logically implicit in Cudworth and which was explicitly developed in the next generation by Clarke. "As for the knowledge which induced the fall," Bacon writes, "it was, as was touched before, not the natural knowledge of

would seem to be going so far as to reverse the usual humanistic position, and to prefer physical to social and moral sciences.¹¹⁰ A similar ardor for abstract scientific knowledge and an appreciation of its *intrinsic*, purely theoretic, value, are evident in a passage written slightly earlier, in criticism of Vaughan. The latter had prided himself upon his writing with inspired heat, and More asks him what valuable knowledge this "inspiration" has bestowed upon him:

But say truly! What can you do in or out of this heat more than other men? Can you cure the sick? Rule and counsell States and Kingdomes more prudently for the common good? Can you find bread for the poor? Give a rationall account of the Phaenomena of Nature, more now then at another time? or more then other men can do? Can you tell me the nature of Light? the causes of the Rainbow? what makes the flux and reflux of the Sea? the operation of the Loadstone, and such like? ¹¹¹

creatures, but the moral knowledge of good and evil; wherein the supposition was, that God's commandments or prohibitions were not the originals of good and evil, but that they had other beginnings, which man aspired to know" (*ibid.*, p. 37).

¹¹⁰ More is of course writing of man prior to the fall; and, as J. S. Diekhoff (*Milton's "Paradise Lost"* [New York, 1946], pp. 44-46) pointed out with reference to Milton, even one who stresses the importance of knowledge of moral good and evil in the infralapsarian state might hold that before the fall the desire for such knowledge was reproachable. But More does not seem to have the distinction in mind. He obviously is comparing the two states, as he refers to man's supralapsarian condition for evidence that the current study of science is justified. More may, however, have another distinction in mind here—that between the knowledge of worldly "experience" as practical, expedient *savoir-faire*, and knowledge of the rational truths upon which the principles of morality rest.

¹¹¹ *Observations*, pp. 98-99. In the interests of candor, reference should here be made to a passage from the "Preface to the Reader" More prefixed to his *Second Lash of Alazonomastix*. More states that if Vaughan had only deprecated his knowledge without defaming his character, he would have refrained from rebutting; and he continues: "I could have been content to have been represented to the world as ignorant of Nature and Philosophy, as he hath by his bold and very bad speeches to me, endeavoured to represent me. For I am not bound in conscience to know Nature, but my self; nor to be a deep philosopher; but to be and approve my self a plain and honest Christian" (p. 157). Even here, however, More does not deprecate the importance of theoretical science, but merely states, first, that he would not have become embroiled in controversy over a charge that he was ignorant of it; and, secondly, that he is not absolutely "*bound in conscience*" to know it.

Significant for our purposes is the observation that More here suggests both practical and purely theoretical knowledge as possible benefits of "inspiration." A passion for abstract scientific knowledge, for "a rationall account of the Phaenomena of Nature," is evident throughout the passage, and a quest for such knowledge is clearly looked upon with favor.

In the *Mystery of Godliness*, however, science, mathematics, and subtlety—all regarded with ardor in the *Defence of the Threefold Cabbala*—appear to have fallen into common disrepute; at least, they keep rather disreputable company. In describing the condition of "infinite swarms of Atheistical Spirits, as well Aereal as Terrestrial," More comments that "though these Rebels may be well enough seen in the knowledge of Nature and Mathematical Subtilties, as also in all manner of Craft and State-policy, yet their Desires being so fully lulled asleep to all Divine Things, they can neither excogitate ought themselves, nor allow of any Reasons from others, whereby they might be brought off from that state of Darkness and Rebellion they are in, to the true worship of the living God." ¹¹² The similarly dim view apparently taken of abstract mathematics in the *Divine Dialogues*, we have already seen. We might note further More's equal disdain for "subtlety." When critics had complained of the abstruseness of his *Antidote against Atheism*, More had replied in his *Appendix* (1655), "That Subtilty is as consistent with Truth as the most grosse Theories; as is manifest in manifold Mathematical Speculations, then which there is nothing more certain nor undeniable to the Reason of Man." ¹¹³ Now, however, we hear instead of "fruitless subtilties and niceties," "all the subtle attaques of shifting Reason," and "the shifting subtilties of a Metaphysical Wit." ¹¹⁴

The shift in More's emphasis may be pointed up further by his attitude toward a problem with which he showed an almost perennial concern—the problem of "enthusiasm." In a sense, More's attitude was fundamentally stable; it was one of consistent opposition. In his works, More constantly warned of the dangers of enthusiasm, dangers to which he was particularly sensitive

¹¹² *Myst. G.*, II.v.3.

¹¹³ *App. Ant. Ath.*, xi.1.

¹¹⁴ *Myst. G.*, V.xiv.7; *Div. Dia.*, pp. 10, 376.

because he saw himself as tinged with a "true" enthusiasm, as opposed to the delusions of various sectarians who conceived themselves as inspired, or, indeed, almost as God. Throughout his adult life, More was in the forefront of the attack upon the spread of this misguided and misconceived "enthusiasm." But one detects a subtle but significantly perceptible change in the basis of his opposition. In his earlier works—in *The Second Lash of Alazonomastix*, in *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, in *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*—More's principal objection is that the enthusiasts neglect and even deprecate the exercise of reason in religion, giving themselves up instead to the dubiously reliable guidance of a purely subjective "inner light." Starting with the *Mystery of Godliness*, however, More begins to move other factors to the forefront. His criticisms are now mainly directed at the enthusiasts' pride, incivility, and immorality; above all, at their heterodox dogmatic aberrations, resulting from (or perhaps resulting in) their persistent tendency to explain—or explain away—virtually all specific Scriptural narrative in terms of allegory. The neglect of reason is of course still mentioned, but it is no longer the primary consideration; and its relegation to a secondary position reflects the reduced role of intellection in More's later religious thought.

To an extent, we may see the change in More's attitude reflected somewhat in his activity. Not that he ceased from intellectual labor; speculation was first, last, and always, his chief delight, and—his own statements to the contrary notwithstanding—one suspects that he thoroughly enjoyed reading and writing as well. But one does note a significant shift in his interests. His earlier works had been mostly concerned with problems of a general philosophical nature. Virtually half of *Psychozoia* constitutes a conspectus of the Plotinian cosmogony, while the other half presents an account of More's earlier spiritual crisis. The other major poems printed in the 1642 edition—*Psychathanasia*, *Antipsychopannychia*, and *Antimonopsychia*—are concerned with various aspects of the soul,¹¹⁵ dealing, as the titles suggest, with

¹¹⁵ Interest in problems concerning the status of the soul appears to have run unusually high around the middle of the seventeenth century. The question of its preexistence was widely debated. To readers of seventeenth-

her immortality, mortalism, and individuality, respectively. The major poems added in the 1647 edition also treat general problems, *Democritus Platonissans* having the infinity of worlds as its theme, and "The Praeexistency of the Soul" treating yet another aspect of the psyche.

Turning to the prose works, *An Antidote against Atheism* (1652) and *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659) require no comment, while the intermediate *Conjectura Cabbalistica* (1653) is the most thoroughly Neoplatonic of More's prose writings. With the *Mystery of Godliness* (1660), however, More sets his scientific and general philosophic interests aside for a time, and applies himself to specifically religious problems. Henceforth, the bulk of his work is to dwell upon particularly religious, and, more often than not, particularly Christian problems—with apocalyptic visions, with Scriptural interpretation, with anti-

century literature, the theory is probably best known through Henry Vaughan's poem, "The Retreat," but one may find numerous other discussions. More, Glanvill (*Lux Orientalis* [London, 1682]; "A Letter of Pre-existence to Richard Baxter," in *Bibliotheca Platonica*, II [1890], 186–192), and the anonymous author (probably George Rust) of *A Letter of Resolution concerning Origen and the Chief of His Opinions* (London, 1661), were the chief exponents of the affirmative side, while Nathanael Culverwel (*An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature*, ed. John Brown [Edinburgh, 1857], pp. 122–132), Edward Warren (*No Praeexistence* [London, 1667]), Samuel Parker (*An Account of the Nature and Extent of the Divine Dominion and Goodnesse, Especially as they refer to the Origenian Hypothesis concerning the Preexistence of Souls* [Oxford, 1667]), and Richard Baxter (*Of the Nature of Spirits* [London, 1682]), led the opposition. More's principal discussions are to be found in "The Praeexistency of the Soul"; *Imm. Soul*, II.xii–xv; *Myst. G.*, I.viii; "The Preface General," secs. 18–19 in *Philosophical Writings*; *Div. Dia.*, pp. 260–269; and *Annotations upon Lux Orientalis* (London, 1682), passim. See also Craig, "Umbra Dei," pp. 356–374.

Discussions of the perennial theme of immortality are too numerous to mention, but reference might be made to one specific aspect, that which constitutes the subject of More's *Antipsychopannychia*. The Mortalist heresy—that the soul sleeps with the body after death and remains dormant until the Resurrection—was advanced in many quarters at the time. It attracted Sir Thomas Browne, found a leading advocate in the Digger leader, Gerard Winstanley, and, for a time, was apparently also adopted by Milton. See N. P. Henry, "Milton and Hobbes: Mortalism and the Intermediate State," *SP* 48 (1951), 234–249, for a full discussion of contemporary interest in this theory. On Milton and More on this question, see M. H. Nicolson, "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*," *PQ* 6 (1927), 14–15.

Catholic and anti-Quaker polemics. The *Apology* (1664) is, of course, directly linked with the *Mystery of Godliness*. The *Mystery of Iniquity*, published in the same year (1664), is directed almost solely at the Romanists, as is the later *An Antidote against Idolatry* (ca. 1672). The Protestant interpretation and application of apocalyptic passages—begun in the *Mystery of Iniquity*—is further developed in *An Exposition of the Seven Epistles to the Seven Churches* (1669), *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* (1680), and *Paralipomena Prophetica* (1685), not to mention a number of relatively minor tracts. And, turning finally to one of More's better-known works, we might remember that well over a third of the *Divine Dialogues* is devoted to anti-Catholic polemics, in the course of which More again relies heavily upon his elaborate exposition of numerous chapters in Scripture.

Reference to the *Divine Dialogues* reminds us, to be sure, that More had by no means abandoned his scientific and metaphysical pursuits entirely. Indeed, we need not hazard a guess as to the course of his scientific activities, for we may refer to More's correspondence with Anne Conway for his own explicit statement regarding the resumption—after the publication of the *Apology* in 1664—of apparently long-neglected mathematical studies.¹¹⁶ Subsequently, More dealt with scientific and philosophical questions in both the *Divine Dialogues* (1668) and the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671), as well as in a number of minor tracts. But even so, one notes a marked difference in his approach. He now sounds very much like a man who writes of these questions not out of desire but out of necessity, because they have been imposed upon him. Whereas in his earlier works More had been largely on the offensive, he now appears to be increasingly on the defensive.¹¹⁷ Much of the *Antidote against Atheism* had

¹¹⁶ "For I have renew'd my acquaintance with such Mathematicall Theorems as I was in some measure conversant in before I fell a Theologizing, which was so long, that I had almost forgott all that little I knew in Geometry which I have recovered with some advantage" (October 17, 1664, *Con. L.*, p. 231).

¹¹⁷ The danger of falling back upon the defensive—of becoming mere apologetics—is one which besets all theodicies. Where a theodicy does clearly seem to be consciously grinding an axe, it loses most of its effectiveness. It has always seemed to me that one of the most remarkable things about

constituted an aggressive attempt to push the argument from design to its furthest extent. Much of the *Divine Dialogues*, by contrast, consists of a point-by-point rebuttal of the alleged natural imperfections catalogued in Lucretius' second book.¹¹⁸

More's major works¹¹⁹ have already been mentioned, and there is little sense in—or little need for—listing all his minor tracts *seriatim*. While a number of these tracts deal with scientific and philosophical problems, it can hardly be denied that, after 1660, the center of More's interest definitely shifted to essentially narrower—the term is not necessarily pejorative—pursuits. While recognizing this fact, however, it should be emphasized that such a shift does not, in itself, necessarily indicate a weakening of intellectual interest. A preoccupation with specifically religious instead of general philosophical questions, with Scriptural interpretation rather than metaphysical speculation, does not constitute a retreat from an intellectualist position. But what such a change does not, *per se*, represent, it may reflect; and, in the context of More's chronological development, this is very much the case. In the light of attitudes expressed in his later works, we may look upon the change in their subject matter as symptomatic of a decline in the importance attached by More not simply to this area or that but to knowledge in general.¹²⁰

Paradise Lost is the fact that—except, as Pope noted, in the third book—the reader is so little *consciously* aware that Milton is “arguing a case.” His purpose—to “assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to men”—is thus much more successfully achieved.

¹¹⁸ The “blemishes” of nature cited by Lucretius and others were much-discussed throughout the seventeenth century; see, on More, Charles Trawick Harrison, “The Ancient Atomists and English Humanism of the Seventeenth Century,” in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 45 (1934), 39–44. The most famous treatments come near the end of the century in the widespread controversy over the theory of an imperfect nature advanced in Thomas Burnet's *Telluris Sacra Theoria* (London, 1681). See Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background* (London, 1940), pp. 27–42, and especially Macklem, *Anatomy of the World*, pp. 23–56, 97–99; and Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia*, pp. 113–152.

¹¹⁹ I have omitted reference to the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, clearly an exception. But, of course, I do not mean to say that More was, in later years, metamorphosed in any radical way, but only that his emphasis changed. The *Enchiridion Ethicum* is, then, perhaps a healthy corrective.

¹²⁰ Regarding More's development, Anderson (*Liberal Religion*, pp. 191–193) and Nicolson (*MP* 27 [1929]) see him as moving in his later years

A third factor which may enable us partially to bridge the gap between More's two aspects is his theory of knowledge—specifically, the theory of “innate ideas.”¹²¹ To be sure, More did not subscribe to the theory in quite the naïve form which has been made famous—or infamous—by the devastating attack directed against it in the first book of Locke's *Essay*.¹²² Locke presents—or

towards “sheer intellectualism.” My own views are closer to those of Powicke (*Cambridge Platonists*, pp. 155–159) who holds that, in his later period, More placed greater emphasis and reliance upon faith and the Scriptures, and less upon philosophy; and who also points to ca. 1660 as the date of the significant change in More's outlook, whereas Tulloch (*Rational Theology*, II, 344–345) and Nicolson (*Con. L.*, p. 320) see any significant change—in his views, his powers, or his activity—as occurring in the late 1660's. I would add, however, first, that More did not simply move from philosophy to theology—from one intellectual realm to another—but came to minimize intellection in general as a phase of religion. Secondly, as regards the date of More's change, the statement from the preface to More's *Theological Works* which Powicke cites as evidence actually is not. For the statement—to the effect that even as regards philosophical problems “a greater certainty . . . is to be drawn from the Scriptures rightly and compleatly understood, than from the clearest Fountains of Philosophy,” which realization “if I had had it sooner, would in greatest part have extinguish'd that so ardent desire of Philosophizing, which seiz'd me when I was very young” (1)—the statement was not, as Powicke assumes, made in 1660. It does not appear in the original preface to the 1660 edition of the *Mystery of Godliness*, and was inserted into the later preface to the *Theological Works*. It is too strong a statement for 1660, a date which represents the point of inflection (in the technical mathematical sense) in More's development, rather than one in which his change was already fully manifested.

¹²¹ For discussions of the theory, see the studies cited in the bibliographical essay, especially J. W. Yolton's *John Locke and the Way of Ideas* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 26–71.

¹²² Whether anyone at all accepted the theory in this naïve form has been much debated. Many—including some of Locke's contemporaries—have held that the position attacked by Locke is, in reality, a mere caricature of that advanced by his opponents. Coleridge went so far as to declare that Locke's “Innate Ideas were Men of Straw, or scarcely so much as that” and planned, as one of his innumerable unfulfilled projects, to “prove Locke not only to be the refuter but the absolute instigator and only possessor of any such ideas as he attempted to destroy (*Seventeenth Century*, pp. 75, 92 n.; and see *Biographia*, I, 94). More recently, however, Yolton has attempted to trace a tradition of adherence to the most naïve theory of innateness (*Way of Ideas*, pp. 28–40, 48–63); but neither his arguments nor his evidence are fully convincing.

It might be added that the Platonists have figured prominently in speculation concerning the identity of Locke's specific target. Lamprecht (“Locke's Attack upon Innate Ideas,” *Philos. Rev.* 36 [1927], 145–165) and Cassirer

represents—a theory holding that the fundamentals declared to be innate are always naturally and effortlessly known by all—regardless of time, place, and circumstance. Having set up the weakest of opponents, he then proceeds to demolish him by asking whether these truths are “known” by the infant in his crib, the raving idiot, or the senile dotard. More, Cudworth, and their confreres are hardly so naïve, however. They are fully aware that while these ideas may be innate, they are nevertheless consciously present only in a mind which is both healthy and mature, and thus capable of attending to what is indeed intrinsically con-natural with it. More is fully explicit; “and when I say actual Knowledge,” he writes,

I do not mean there is a certain Number of Ideas flaring and shining to the Animadversive Faculty, like so many torches or Stars in the Firmament, to outward Sight, that there are any Figures that take their distinct Places, and are legibly writ there, like the Red Letters or Astronomical Characters in an Almanack: But I understand thereby an active sagacity in the Soul, or quick recollection, as it were, whereby some small Business being hinted upon her, she runs out presently into a more clear and larger Conception.¹²³

Locke’s attack, furthermore, is not only unfair, but illogical. One might as easily refute the notion that the ability to run is innate—hardly a debatable point—by asking whether a toddler or a paralytic could compete in the 60-yard dash.

If we must not, however, exaggerate the Platonists’ position on the one hand, neither must we underestimate on the other. Above all, it should be emphasized that, to More and his associates, the theory did not merely mean that the soul bears a sympathetic (using the word in the older sense) relation to truths for which it has only a capacity. It meant rather that, in its proper state, the soul is in actual possession of these truths. They thus go far

(*Platonic Renaissance*, p. 59 n.) have held that Locke’s attack was principally directed at the Cambridge Platonists. R. I. Aaron, *John Locke*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1955), pp. 88–94, adheres to the older nineteenth-century view that the brunt of Locke’s attack was intended for the Cartesians, but he asserts that the Platonists were probably a secondary target. Other suggestions have been the Scholastics, Herbert of Cherbury (singled out by Locke himself), a semi-popular seventeenth-century English tradition, or no specific target at all; see Yolton, *Way of Ideas*, pp. 26–28.

¹²³ *Ant. Ath.*, I.v.2.

beyond Descartes, for instance. As S. P. Lamprecht¹²⁴ ably pointed out, the Cartesian position assumes only that the soul's "innate ideas" are such whose validity the soul must acknowledge, once they are presented to her. But so long as the soul is not confronted with these truths, she can have no knowledge of them. To the Platonists, however, the theory of innate ideas bore both a logical and a psychological aspect. Logically, it meant that certain ideas must be approved by the soul as soon as they are apprehended by her. Psychologically, it meant that the soul had already apprehended them—had, indeed, no need for apprehending, knowledge of them being inborn and of the very essence of the deiform mind. To be sure, external occasion—perhaps empirical experience—might be necessary to "remind" the soul of its latent knowledge; but the knowledge is nevertheless properly of the soul and *in* it. "There is," says More, "an active and actual Knowledge in a Man, of which these outward Objects are rather the re-minders than the first Begetters or Implanters."¹²⁵ Perhaps most revealing is the simile More goes on to develop. The soul with its dormant knowledge is compared to a sleeping musician, who, upon being awakened, can sing a whole song if only reminded of the first few words—"and this Faculty I venture to call actual Knowledge, in such a Sense as the sleeping Musitian's skill might be called actual Skill when he thought nothing of

¹²⁴ "The Role of Descartes in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Studies in the History of Ideas* 3 (1935), 216: "He [i.e., Descartes] meant . . . ideas that cannot be denied without contradiction, and they [i.e., the Platonists] meant . . . ideas that were in some way inborn . . . On the whole, innateness was more a logical matter for Descartes, and more a psychological matter for them." See also Lamprecht's "Innate Ideas in the Cambridge Platonists," *Philos. Rev.* 35 (1926), 572. Eeg-Olofsson, *Inner Light*, pp. 14–15 n. and 44 n., attempts to identify the position on "innate ideas" of Descartes, Barclay, and the Platonists, and also tries to point out personal links. But he cites no significant evidence and his arguments are unconvincing. Yolton, likewise, considerably underestimates the extent of More's position. He virtually identifies his position with Culverwel's, groups both thinkers, with Descartes, as advocates of the "dispositional" rather than the naïve form of the theory, and classifies them, with Locke, as opponents of the widely held naïve view (*Way of Ideas*, pp. 40–43). In seeing More as being principally an opponent rather than an advocate of "innate ideas," Yolton misses both the tone and the content of More's writings on the subject.

¹²⁵ *Ant. Ath.*, I.v.2.

it.”¹²⁶ The Platonists, moreover, are fully cognizant of the extent of their position. Aware of the distinction between the so-called “logical” and “temporal” senses of the *a priori* concept, they nevertheless insist upon both, arguing, as Cassirer put it, “not only for the *a priori* validity of theoretical and ethical principles, but also for the ‘innateness’ of these principles.”¹²⁷ That he had the distinction clearly in mind, More makes readily apparent. In presenting his ontological theistic proof, for example, More argues that while he himself adheres to the theory of actually innate ideas, nevertheless, for his own immediate purposes, the logical *a priori* will suffice; and this, he insists, must be admitted by all.¹²⁸

Being aware of the distinction, then, More unquestionably understands the full implications of his advocacy of the theory of “innate ideas.” These are, for our purposes, significant. For while the theory emphasizes man’s rational nature, it may also serve to minimize the need for intellectual endeavor. The “ideas,” being the birthright of all, need not be actively sought, as they are already imbedded within the soul. To be sure, their knowledge could be eclipsed by various physical and moral deformities;

¹²⁶ *Ant. Ath.*, I.v.3. It might be noted that, despite his advocacy of the theory of “innate ideas,” and despite his belief in the soul’s pre-existence, More makes little use of the Platonic doctrine that all learning is reminiscence, although he does refer to it in arguing for “innate ideas” in his *Antipsychopannychia*, ii.42. Culverwel, however, in opposing the doctrine of “innate ideas,” does connect it with the theories of pre-existence and reminiscence, and goes on to criticize them all (*Light of Nature*, pp. 122–132).

¹²⁷ *Platonic Renaissance*, p. 59n. Cassirer then states that “the union of the *a priori* with the ‘innate’ is especially noticeable in Henry More,” and goes on to criticize More for his failure to distinguish between the two types of *a priori*, lamenting “how little the Cambridge thinkers are accustomed to distinguish between the ‘logical’ and the ‘temporal’ *a priori* in the development of their fundamental thesis.” In reality, however, while More does adopt both concepts, he can hardly be charged with the “confusion of this sort” which Cassirer later lays at his door.

¹²⁸ See *Ant. Ath.*, I.vii.2: “But if this seem, though it be not, too subtle which I contend for, viz. That the Soul hath actual Knowledge in her self in that Sense which I have explained; yet surely this at least will be confess’d to be true, That the nature of the Soul is such, that she will certainly and fully assent to some Conclusions, however, she came to the knowledge of them, unless she do manifest violence to her own Faculties: Which Truths must therefore be concluded not fortuitous or arbitrary, but Natural to the Soul.” See also the similar statement in *App. Ant. Ath.*, ii.1.

the mind's "dirt and filth" could obscure if not obliterate its apprehension of the innate ideas. But their recovery was for More mostly a matter of moral rather than intellectual discipline; and it was principally a cure (in the Latin sense) of the mind, not so much its actual exercise. To return to an earlier simile, it was a question of training the legs rather than actually running. Of course, Roger Bannister would point out that running is the only effective method of training the legs. Plato would similarly inform us that, while learning is essentially reminiscence, it can only be successfully sustained through dialectic, and rather acute dialectic at that. For More, however, the passion for the simplicity and the universality of truth often proved decisive. Consequently, he tended to assume that sound moral uprightness was virtually sufficient for assuring the mind of the direct insight into truth afforded by its own stock of ideas. The road to knowledge of the ideas is thus, in a sense, a *via negativa*. The pristine soundness of the soul is restored not so much through re-creation or even re-touching, but by wiping off the accumulated dust; by wiping off, furthermore, *moral*, rather than intellectual dust.

That More's theory of innate ideas helps us in part to understand his maintenance of two seemingly contradictory attitudes, should be obvious. For the theory makes it possible to emphasize reason but not reasoning, intellect but not intellection, the possession of knowledge but not its acquisition.¹²⁹ It assumes that the soul innately has the bare minimum of requisite knowledge,

¹²⁹ The possession, rather than the acquisition, of truth, is indeed characteristic of all intuition, whether innate or not. Cf. Aquinas on *ratio* and *intellectus*. "Reasoning, therefore, is compared to understanding as movement is to rest, or acquisition to possession" (*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 79, a. 8). In More, one might note an interesting passage in the *Divine Dialogues* in which Bathynous *defends* the search for religious knowledge against objections (on the grounds of the sin of "curiosity") raised by Sophron. But the basis of the defense is *not* that the search for the knowledge of God and His ways must enter into man's religious activity; *not* that the constant exertion of all human energies—intellectual as well as moral—must be sustained in the quest for God; but rather that there is an occasional need for knowing certain religious matters: "But yet I humbly conceive that it is not always an itch of searching into, but sometimes a necessity of more punctually knowing, the truth of the Mysteries of God, that drives some Mens Spirits into a more close and anxious Meditation of so profound Matters" (p. 91).

and, in More at least, it tends to assume that the soul's conscious awareness of its knowledge is attained through little intellectual effort. Hence, by its very "rationalistic" token, a theory which emphasizes the rational nature of the soul, can become an anti-intellectual influence. On the one hand, More declares that the knowledge of a few essentials is sufficient. They may not be "all that ye know on earth," but, for the commonalty at least, they are very nearly "all that ye need to know." On the other hand, he holds most of the fundamental essentials are "innate ideas," already known by the purified soul. There is consequently little need remaining for active intellectual effort. More could thus state that "Science, Art, and Sapience" were adventitious to happiness, and yet—without really qualifying his position seriously—go on to declare that "the knowledge of principles" was nevertheless necessary: "Now altho perfect Happiness, which is that Pleasure that ariseth from a Sense of Virtue, and a Conscience of Well-doing, may want Science, Art, and Sapience; yet we must also affirm, that such Intelligence as, by Andronicus, is defin'd, 'To be the Knowledge of Principles,' can by no means be separate from Happiness, For 'tis in truth impossible that a Mind, which is purified and influenced by true Prudence, can be so blunt or stupify'd, as to admit any Doubt concerning the Principles of Science."¹³⁰ The distinction between "Science, Art, and Sapience," and "the Knowledge of Principles," is, I think, not merely quantitative. It is not simply a question of so much or so little knowledge. There is suggested rather a distinction between a "science" which is attained by plodding intellectual effort, and a "knowledge of principles" which is immediately apprehended—which, More might have added, is antecedently coeval with the soul. The maintenance of man's rational character is essential to human happiness, but the exercise of man's rational faculties may perhaps prove dispensable. The theory of innate ideas served More admirably in that it assures the former while yet not insisting upon the latter.

The expediency of the doctrine for More may be judged by his increasing reliance upon it in his later writings. We should note particularly that the number of the "innate ideas" tended

¹³⁰ *Ench. Eth.*, II.x.8.

to increase perceptibly, perhaps even extravagantly. Even a sympathetic student is led to declare that "as the years went on, the language in which the doctrine was expressed became more and more extravagant, and the theory became less and less safeguarded against a new dogmatism. Culverwel spoke of 'two or three common notions,' but in the later writings of More and especially Cudworth there were always enough innate ideas to prove whatever these writers happened at the minute to want to establish beyond the doubt of controversy."¹³¹ Lamprecht's tone is perhaps too severe, but his contention can hardly be gainsaid. And indeed, a constant increase in the number of ideas assumed to be innate is precisely what one might have expected. Once a thinker has placed his reliance upon innate ideas, it need not take him long to discover that the ideas are, in themselves, inadequate. To meet the deficiency, he may then either move vertically, by developing further inferential truths from the original ideas, or he may move horizontally, by asserting that new ideas must now be accepted as innate. The former course would have forced More to fall back upon deductive reasoning, and would have left the need for intellectual effort as keen as ever. More consequently resorted to the second alternative, and through frequent recourse to it, the number of the "innate ideas" inevitably increased.

It should be once again emphasized, however, that when all is said and done, we are still confronted by a very real cleavage within More's thought. The factors we have noted may explain much, but they will hardly explain everything. More's polemics widened the dichotomy, and no doubt set it in bolder relief, but they certainly did not create it. More's appreciation of minute subtle thought may have diminished in his later years, but he could still conclude the first book of the *Enchiridion Ethicum* with the statement: "Some will say, that these Observations are too minute; but if they contribute to the making a better Judgment on all beings, and such as a good and prudent Man is bound to do, I think the Labor will not be wholly lost."¹³² It is un-

¹³¹ S. P. Lamprecht, *Philos. Rev.* 35 (1926), 565. On the development of the doctrine in Descartes, cf. G. S. Brett, *History of Psychology*, II, 206-209.

¹³² *Ench. Eth.*, I.xiii.12.

doubtedly true that More emphasizes reason—or rather, Reason—to a greater extent than he does reasoning. Yet at times, he speaks of the need for intellectual *effort* in religion, of the importance of exerting all intellectual energies in the service of God, and the quest *for* Him:

For what can indeed more highly gratifie a man, whose very nature is Reason, and special Prerogative Speech; then by his skill in Arts and Languages, by the Sagacity of his Understanding, and industrious comparing of one place of those Sacred pages with another, to work out, or at least to clear up, some Divine Truth out of the Scripture to the unexpected Satisfaction of himself and general service of the Church; the dearest Faculty of his Soul and greatest glory of his Nature acting then with the fullest commission, and to so good an end, that it need know no bounds, but Joy and Triumph may be unlimited . . . Wherefore that the mind of man may be worthily employ'd and taken up with a kind of Spiritual husbandry, God has not made the Scriptures like an artificial Garden, wherein the Walks are plain and regular, the Plants sorted and set in order, the Fruits ripe, and the Flowers blown, and all things fully exposed to our view; but rather like an uncultivated field, where indeed we have the ground and hidden seeds of all precious things, but nothing can be brought to any great beauty, order, fulness or maturity, without our own industry.¹³³

This passage serves as a fitting conclusion to our discussion of More's second aspect—that in which the presumed “simplicity” of truth figures so prominently. For it reminds *us* to beware of oversimplification, to refrain from fitting More into the procrustean bed of our own preconceptions. It should remind us that More's thought is not “like an artificial Garden, wherein the Walks are plain and regular,” but that it includes complex divergent—and possibly contradictory—tendencies, of which the passion for simplicity may very well be one—and a major one. But, on the other hand, maintenance of the proper perspective should not prevent us from recognizing the nature and implications of any particular aspect. Our regard for viewing the forest should not render us insensitive to the trees—or to the acorns; for we shall yet have occasion to examine their oaks.

¹³³ *Myst. G.*, I.ii.4.

From Religion to Moralism: More and His Successors

THE YEAR 1688—marked by the Glorious Revolution, immediately preceding the Toleration Act, and tightly sandwiched between the respective appearances of Newton's *Principia* and Locke's *Essay*—has often served (particularly to nineteenth-century critics)¹ as a convenient point of departure for the study of eighteenth-century religious thought. In a sense, its selection as a *terminus a quo* is both convenient and justified; a study must, after all, start somewhere. Yet, there is a genuine need for transcending this limit, for the roots of eighteenth-century English religious thought are clearly discernible in pre-revolution theology. In particular, its character derives, in part, from Cambridge Platonism, and a number of its characteristics are manifestly present in the Platonists' works. More's thought is clearly related to the transition from the rich and complex religious fabric of the earlier seventeenth century to the bleak simplicity which characterizes so much of eighteenth-century theology. This relation primarily concerns what we have seen as more's second aspect. If we consider More as looking, Janus-like, before and after, I think it may be said that, on the whole, his first aspect looks back and the second looks ahead. One is rooted in the fertile soil of the Renaissance while the other breathes the rarefied atmosphere of the Enlightenment. Hence, any study of the consequences of More's thought in relation to his successors

¹ See, e.g., Coleridge, "A Lay Sermon Addressed to the Higher and Middle Classes," in *Works*, ed. W. G. T. Shedd (New York, 1884), VI, 203, and, of course, Mark Pattison's pioneering study, "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688–1750," which, though relatively inoffensive to orthodoxy, appeared in the famous—or infamous—*Essays and Reviews*, 3rd ed. (London, 1860), pp. 254–329.

must concentrate upon what we have seen as More's second aspect. Consequently, the ramifications of that aspect will henceforth serve as our focus.

This chapter will thus dwell principally upon what is, from my point of view, much the weaker side of More. It should therefore be emphasized at the outset—and it should be assumed throughout—that there is no intention here of completely equating the position of More or the other Cambridge Platonists with that of their successors. As compared with most of the Latitudinarian clergy, More and his confreres certainly possess superior insight, keener perception, broader scope, and greater complexity. One does feel, however, that there is a need for simply setting the record straight, for pointing out that, in many respects, the prevailing emphasis of much eighteenth-century English theology is directly related to Cambridge Platonism of the seventeenth. Again, there is little to be gained from castigating More for having opened the door to subsequent developments. Such a procedure would be not only unprofitable but largely unjustified; even for much that *was* his responsibility, he can hardly be *held* responsible. There is, however, a great deal to be gained from the mere recognition of More's true place in the course of English religious thought, from seeing him in relation to both his contemporaries and his successors, from gaining, in short, the proper historical perspective.

We might best begin with the central theme of the preceding chapter—the simplicity of religion. In emphasizing that religion must be presumed plain, More was very much attuned to the *zeitgeist*, and to the spirit which dominated English religious thought throughout much—probably most—of the eighteenth century. An age of *esprits simplistes*, Professor Lovejoy² has called it. And it was on the very grounds upon which More had stood that later thinkers based their view that religion must be, on its speculative side, simple. The universality of religion and the need for assuming its accessibility to even the weakest intellect proved, in this respect, decisive. Edward Fowler, whose apologia for the Platonists generally reflects their opinions accurately, asserts that

² See A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp. 7-10.

religion is so simple "that an honest heart is a sufficient prerequisite to the understanding of it." Religious truth is so clear that it need hardly be sought actively; indeed, it would require some effort *not* to apprehend it. For the doctrines necessary for salvation "are delivered with that perspicuity and clearness that nothing but mens shutting their eyes against the light can keep them from discerning their true meaning."³ Tillotson, probably the most famous of Latitudinarian divines, takes a similar position:

And to the attaining of this knowledge which is absolutely necessary to salvation, no such extraordinary pains and study is requir'd; but only a teachable disposition, and a due application of mind. For whatever in religion must be known by all, must in all reason be plain and easy, and lie level to all capacities; otherwise we must say, that God who would have all men to be saved, hath not provided for the salvation of all men.⁴

In the eighteenth century, we find the same theme stressed by leading religious thinkers. "Let me just take notice," says Butler in concluding a sermon, "of the danger of over-great refinements; of going besides or beyond the plain, obvious, first appearances of things, upon the subject of morals and religion. The least observation will show, how little the generality of men are capable of speculations. Therefore morality and religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood: it must appeal to what we call plain common sense, as distinguished from superior capacity and improvement; because it appeals to mankind."⁵ Even so philosophic a thinker as Berkeley—sometimes regarded, incidentally,⁶ as the last flicker of Cambridge Platonism—advances the argument. In an early dialogue, he puts into the mouth of a character a strident condemnation of Scholasticism, with its "perplexities, chimeras, and inconsistent ideas," and the criticism then concludes with two rhetorical questions: "Who doth not see that such an ideal abstracted faith is never thought of by the bulk of Christians,

³ *Principles and Practices*, pp. 108–109.

⁴ John Tillotson, *Sermons on Several Subjects and Occasions* (London, 1757), II, 428–429.

⁵ Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons*, in *Works*, ed. W. E. Gladstone (Oxford, 1896), II, 106.

⁶ See J. A. Stewart, "Cambridge Platonists," *Encyc. of Religion and Ethics*, III, 173.

husbandmen, for instance, artisans, or servants? Or what footsteps are there in the Holy Scriptures to make us think that the wire-drawing of abstract ideas was a task enjoined either Jews or Christians?"⁷ As in More, the paramount necessity of establishing a religion which may conform to the standards of "husbandmen, for instance, artisans, or servants," banishes "the wiredrawing of abstract ideas" from the general religious scene.

For Berkeley—together with most eighteenth-century religious thinkers—is not content with asserting, as had the humanists and the Reformers, that the unlettered may achieve salvation. They go on to assume that, *ergo*, whatever intellectual element—be it content or activity—is beyond the grasp of these unlettered may safely be dismissed from the general religious realm. As the pervasive "democratic" bias became dominant, religious faith was thus gradually reduced to the lowest common denominator. There developed what Lovejoy has termed "an intellectual equalitarianism," leading, in turn, to a paradoxical—yet very definite—"rationalistic anti-intellectualism":

The presumption of the universal accessibility and verifiability of all that is really needful for men to know implied that all subtle, elaborate, intricate reasonings about abstruse questions beyond the grasp of the majority are certainly unimportant, and probably untrue. Thus any view difficult to understand, or requiring a long and complex exercise of the intellect for its verification, could be legitimately dismissed without examination, at least if it concerned any issue in which man's moral or religious interests were involved.⁸

As the title of Lovejoy's essay suggests, he is principally concerned with Deism, and it is indeed in Deism—which, it should be remembered, represents a qualitative as well as a quantitative dehydration of religion—that this "democratic" religious attitude found its fullest expression. Needless to say, More and his associates are poles removed from any purely natural religion. Nevertheless, even if only pushed to lesser extremes and maintained within the ramparts of a revealed religion, the democratic em-

⁷ George Berkeley, *Alciphron; or, The Minute Philosopher*, ed. T. E. Jessop, in *Works*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (Edinburgh, 1950), III, 300; "The Seventh Dialogue," sec. 9.

⁸ "The Parallel of Deism and Classicism," in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore, 1948), pp. 84–85.

phasis upon simplicity could still act as a potent force; and not, one is inclined to think, a very constructive force.

As we have already had occasion to notice, the "democratic" attitude is closely related to a strong emphasis upon practical ethics. And certainly, the overmastering concern with moral conduct—often to the neglect and detriment of the specific content of religion proper—is the most characteristic feature of Restoration and eighteenth-century theology. In large measure, this concern derives from the fountainhead of Cambridge Platonism. The question of the relations of morality and religion is therefore equally crucial for an understanding of More's own thought and for an appreciation of his relation to his successors. The problem commanded considerable attention in the seventeenth century, and was in fact discussed in connection with these very Cambridge Platonists. Whichcote's quondam tutor accused him of introducing a "moral divinitie minted,"⁹ and the charge was often repeated. It is one of the criticisms Patrick—who, as a defender of the "new sect of Latitude-Men," of course went on to reject it—put into the mouth of his nonconformist, and Fowler similarly devoted a number of pages to its refutation.¹⁰ The various defenses presented by the Platonists themselves, particularly by Whichcote and More, against the allegation of moralism offer ample testimony to both the currency of the accusation and the seriousness with which it was regarded. Above all, they indicate

⁹ Tuckney, "Eight Letters," p. 39.

¹⁰ See Patrick, *Friendly Debate*, pp. 108–114, and Fowler, *Principles and Practices*, pp. 119–124. It might be added, however, that despite the currency of the subject, seventeenth-century discussions of morality and religion tend to be somewhat inadequate. One finds the *champs-clos* at once too large and too small, the charges at once too sweeping and too narrow. There is, above all, little real analysis. Even Shaftesbury, who posited the relations of morality and religion as the subject of his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* and complained that "the subject-matter has been so little examined" (in *Characteristics*, I, 238), devoted most of his essay to purely moral questions rather than to an analysis of the relations of morality and religion. It should also be pointed out that a modern reader may be further disconcerted by the fact that in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century usage, the term "morality" often does not refer to morality proper but to natural, as opposed to revealed, religion. Inasmuch as the period was marked by a coincident growing reliance upon both natural religion and moral conduct, there is some justification in treating the movements towards moralism and Deism in conjunction. But even so, it should be kept in mind that they are, *in essentia*, distinct phenomena.

that the problem of morality and religion received their most serious consideration.

Here as elsewhere, More clearly avoided extreme positions on either side. On the one hand, he thoroughly rejected the Solifidian—and often antinomian—view that morality is to be summarily dismissed as a false idol of the natural man, the corrupt excrescence of human self-assertion. On the contrary, he regarded it as an integral and indispensable element of the “Divine Life,” deeply rooted in faith and even ingendered by supernal aid.¹¹ And on the other hand, he would hardly have agreed with its overzealous advocates that morality is essentially coextensive with religion and that religion is merely morality with a frosting—or, in Matthew Arnold’s famous phrase, “morality touched by emotion.”¹² More recognized that morality and religion, though not disjunct, are nevertheless distinct. For religion implies, at the very least, belief in and worship of a real Object, and not merely devotion to a projected abstraction—be it even personified—of subjective ethical ideals. It involves, in short, some sort of relation to God—for the Christian Platonist, it of course involves considerably more—and it can hardly be equated with any form of morality.

More rejected outright, then, any virtual identification of

¹¹ While pointing to More’s opposition to antinomianism, however, I should like to take exception to Norman Sykes’s statement that the Cambridge Platonists’ “emphasis upon the moral duties of religion had a direct relevance to the contemporary situation, and was designed to stem the torrent of antinomianism which characterised the society of Restoration England in reaction against the censorship of manners during the Commonwealth” (*Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century* [Cambridge, Eng., 1934], p. 22). I would object, first, that the Platonists’ moral emphasis was deeply ingrained and not simply designed to meet the exigencies of the contemporary situation; and secondly, that antinomianism never develops “in reaction against the censorship of manners.” Libertinism, perhaps, does; but the two—both as terms and concepts—must be carefully distinguished. Antinomianism, while no doubt a perversion, nevertheless has religious roots, and is, in fact, the extreme development of Augustine’s “ama, et fac quod vis.” Libertinism, by contrast, is motivated by a desire for the *objects* of lust, not by the desire to live in an unrestricted “state of grace.” See the brief but pregnant remarks of R. G. Collingwood, *Religion and Philosophy* (London, 1916), pp. 25–27, and A. E. Taylor, *The Problem of Conduct* (London, 1901), pp. 473–481.

¹² *Literature and Dogma*, p. 18. Arnold’s view was subjected to penetrating—and, to an Arnold admirer, excessively acid—criticism in the concluding essay of F. H. Bradley’s *Ethical Studies*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1927), pp. 314–319.

morality and religion. And yet even if we recognize that More acknowledged a clear distinction between the two, the question of moralism cannot be wholly dismissed. For it is the nature of the distinction which is the key to the problem. Primarily, the question is whether it is assumed to be qualitative or quantitative, a difference of kind or merely of degree. For a truly fundamental distinction must pertain to the very essence, the *Ding-an-sich*, of religion and morality respectively; and it is the presence or the absence of this in More which must be determined.

We may best approach the question by referring to a passage from the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, one which occurs midway through the second book, at the opening of the chapter on piety. The preceding chapter had been concerned with justice which, says More, "is well defin'd, by the Lawyers, to be 'Constans et perpetua Voluntas suum cuique tribuendi, A constant and perpetual Will to give every man his own.'" The stage is thus set for the introduction of the definition of piety: "Justice comprehends the two parts of Piety and Probity. For Piety it self is a sort of Justice, by which we render to God the thing which is God's; that is to say, the thing which of Right appertaineth to him."¹³

The definition of piety—repeated twice elsewhere, incidentally—is, I think, of some importance. The extent of its significance may be more clearly appreciated if we glance at what is very likely its original source. One of the minor Socratic dialogues is devoted to the definition of "*hosiotēs*, 'piety,' or as we should probably say now," says A. E. Taylor, "religion."¹⁴ After some preliminary sparring, Euthyphro presents his definition: "Piety or holiness, Socrates, appears to me to be that part of justice which attends to the gods, as there is the other part of justice which attends to men." Socrates pretends to accept the suggestion, but with characteristically ironic modesty, he immediately points out its inadequacy, by raising a "minor" objection: "That is good, Euthyphro; yet still there is a little point about which I should like to have further information. What is the meaning of 'attention?' For attention can hardly be used in the same sense when applied to the gods as when applied to other things."¹⁵ The question goes

¹³ *Ench. Eth.*, II.iv.1; II.v.1.

¹⁴ *Plato*, p. 147.

¹⁵ *Euthyphro*, 12–13. More does not attribute the definition to this source, but rather, where he does mention a source, cites Cicero. This is slightly

unanswered, and, like most of the early Socratic dialogues, the *Euthyphro* ends with "a conclusion in which nothing is concluded."

The brief exchange has touched upon a fundamental problem, however, a problem having the widest ramifications. Briefly stated, it is this: is man's relation to God to be conceived in basically human terms, being essentially similar to purely human relations? Or is it, in a sense—a qualitative sense—unique? The question is relevant to almost every facet of the religious life. Thus, in the field of religious psychology, we might hold, with William James, that religious emotion is generically no different from any other, or we might insist, with Rudolf Otto, that it is "perfectly *sui generis* and irreducible to any other."¹⁶ Or, with reference to religious acts, norms, or obligations, we might ask whether they differ, *in essentia*, from corresponding and analogous secular elements. We might ask whether man's relation to God is, in a very real sense, *unique*, or is merely another relation, essentially of the same kind as obtains between humans, only raised to a higher degree because involving the Highest Object; whether, in short, morality and religion are qualitatively distinct.

Seen in its proper perspective, then, More's definition of piety acquires special significance. For it affords us an insight into his conception of the respective characters of morality and religion. If we ask whether More identifies the two, the answer must of course be no. At times he indeed emphasizes that their difference is generic. In a passage which has been singled out as one of the better specimens of his prose,¹⁷ he makes the distinction unmistakably clear:

A Nightingale may vary with her voice into a multitude of interchangeable Notes, and various Musical falls and risings, and yet be

surprising in view of the fact that, in the Latin edition of the *Enchiridion*, the *Euthyphro* is mentioned in the very next sentence following the definition of religion as justice towards God. "Jus autem Dei vulgo Cultus illius dicitur, quemadmodum apud Platonem Euthyphro illud appellat *timios kai geras*." It might be added that Whichcote (*Works*, II, 52, and III, 163) also attributed the definition to Cicero.

¹⁶ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. J. W. Harvey, 2nd ed. (London, 1950), p. 7. For James, see his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1902), pp. 27-28.

¹⁷ By W. F. Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson: A Study of its Literary Aspects* (London, 1932), p. 294.

but a Nightingal, no Chorister: But should she but sing one Hymn or Hallelujah, I should deem her no Bird but an Angel. So the highest improvement of Natural Knowledge, or mere Morality, will argue us no more than the Sons of Men: But to be of one will completely with God, will make us, or doth argue us to be the Sons of God.¹⁸

But if we ask whether, on the whole, man's relation to God is conceived by More as essentially analogous to his relation to his fellow-man, I think we must reply in the affirmative. Cicero's definition of religion—"est enim pietas iustitia adversum deos"—is cited in two other works,¹⁹ excluding the *Enchiridion Ethicum*. In one of these, the anti-Catholic *An Antidote against Idolatry*, the definition receives both signal praise and significant application. In a chapter undertaking to examine, as its title states, "What is Idolatry according to the Determination of clear and free Reason," "the first Conclusion" presented is "That Idolatry is a kind of Injustice against God." For proof of the proposition More turns to Cicero:

That this is true, may appear from that Definition of Religion in Tully, who defines it Justitiam adversus Deum. Which is not the sense of Tully only, but the very Voice of Reason and Nature. And therefore Idolatry being one kind of Irreligion or Impiety, it must needs include in it a kind of Injustice against God.²⁰

Where idolatry itself is denounced as immoral rather than as sinful, it would appear evident that religion proper is conceived as an essentially moral relationship. To this extent, the unique character of religion as a distinct, purely *sui generis* entity is denied. On the one hand, then, More rejects any identification of moral conduct with religion. The latter involves, in addition, not only faith in God but also a complete abdication of our own will in favor of His. But on the other hand, he blunts the edge of his position by failing to make the more fundamental distinction between the respective intrinsic characters of morality and religion.

¹⁸ *Discourses*, p. 408.

¹⁹ See *Div. Dia.*, p. 377, and *Ant. Id.*, ch. ii. Cicero's definition is set forth in *De Natura Deorum*, ed. and trans. H. Rackham, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), I.xli. In Cicero, it might be added, the word *pietas* is used not only with reference to God, but with reference to parents, benefactors, neighbors, and the state as well. See Chr. Godofr. Schutzii, *Lexicon Cicero-nianum* (Lipsiae, 1819), s.v. *pietas*.

²⁰ *Ant. Id.*, ch. ii.

Both the extent and the implications of More's position may be clarified by pursuing it to its logical and psychological basis. In considering the respective characters of morality and religion, it should be clear that we are ultimately driven back upon the question of anthropomorphism. For at bottom, any claim for the uniqueness of religion must rest upon the unicity of God. And with specific reference to More, we find this very question to be of major relevance. Evident throughout his work is an inadequate grasp of the absolute chasm between the character, so to speak, of God and man respectively. Indeed, once we have observed it, such a tendency appears to be a natural result—though by no means an inevitable corollary—of More's cardinal principle, deiformity. While deiformity no doubt represents the noblest of ethical and religious ideals, its quest may be beset by numerous pitfalls. Chief among these is the danger of overreaching oneself, of seeking—and asserting—not deiformity but deification; or to use the Miltonic expression, of “affecting Godhead.” And if the truth must be told, Neoplatonism has not always taken sufficient care to guard against this perversion. The danger is particularly great inasmuch as the Neoplatonists treat deiformity as being not only an ethical ideal, a *seinsollen*, but a metaphysical fact, a status. An eminent contemporary Platonist has already called attention to this question. Speaking of “all those philosophies and religions which treat the human soul as a ‘fallen’ divinity whose task is to recover its original place among the rest of the ‘gods,’” A. E. Taylor points out that “they all abolish any real distinction of status between divinity and humanity.” And in a footnote Taylor specifically applies his remarks to Neoplatonism, commenting that “in the philosophical literature of the world this type of view finds its most perfect expression in the neo-Platonic version of the fall and descent of the soul as set forth by Plotinus.”²¹ Innumerable passages from the *Enneads* come to mind: “But we, what are we?”

²¹ A. E. Taylor, *Faith of a Moralist*, I, 121–122 and n. Taylor is principally concerned with the moral implications of a theory of fall, descent, and inevitable return, arguing that it makes progress as much of an allusion as the current “fall,” and hence leaves the moral life a hollow mockery. Consequently, he emphasizes not only the soul's origin but its inevitable return. I am rather concerned with the theological implications, and the nature rather than the destiny of the soul. But the basic point remains the same.

Before our birth to the world we were in the Divine, men of another rank than now, of the order of the Gods . . . Even now we are not cast out; but upon that Primal-Man which we were, another man has been intruded." Or again: "Before all let every Soul remember that itself is the creator of every living thing, having breathed the life into them . . . If it is soul that gives worth, why does anyone ignore himself and follow aught else? You reverence the Soul elsewhere; then revere yourself." ²² Plotinus' advice did not go unheeded. His very words are cited repeatedly by various Neoplatonic writers, the Cambridge men included. "We are charged," says Whichcote, "to have a just reverence for ourselves, as taken into a peculiarity Godward. 'Reverere te ipsum,' was a great rule of old"; and a similar exhortation is delivered in an aphorism: "Reverence God in thyself: for God is more in the Mind of Man, than in any part of this world besides; for we (and we only here) are made after the Image of God." ²³ Turning to More, we find him, in the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, presenting the same counsel, only in the name of Pythagoras. "Remember, in short," he urges, "the better advice of Pythagoras, Summe reverere Teipsum." ²⁴ And it should be emphasized that the citation is not an isolated remark. It reflects a deeply ingrained attitude. Confining ourselves only to the *Enchiridion*, we may point immediately to a number of other passages cited by More. In the chapter on piety, for instance, he quotes Marcus Aurelius to the effect, "'That every man's Mind is a God, and had its Original from him.'" ²⁵ And a few paragraphs earlier, we hear from Cicero, who, "in his Tusculan Questions, has such magnificent Words touching human Souls;—'As if,' says he, 'the mind of man were but extracted from the mind divine; and to be compar'd with no other but God himself, if it were not arrogance so to speak.'" ²⁶ "If it were not arrogance so to speak"

²² 6.4.14 and 5.1.2, respectively. Preller and Ritter took 5.1.2 as referring to the World-Soul, but I think MacKenna is surely correct in pointing out that it must principally refer to individual human souls. See his note in Plotinus, *The Ethical Treatises*, trans. Stephen MacKenna (London, 1917), p. 132.

²³ *Works*, IV, 56, and *Aphorisms*, no. 798, respectively.

²⁴ *Ench. Eth.*, III.vii.3.

²⁵ *Ench. Eth.*, II.v.7.

²⁶ *Ench. Eth.*, II.v.6.

—“si hoc fas est dictu” is Cicero’s own much weaker language—but the fact remains that the words are spoken. Even more revealing is another passage cited out of “Tully,”—one of many, says More, which might be adduced from “Antoninus and Cicero”: “We shall therefore add, out of the first book of Tully *de Legibus*, onely that short saying, Namely, That Virtue was in Man the same as in God.”²⁷

Certainly, we should not make the mistake of completely identifying More’s position with that of the classical sources upon which—especially in the *Enchiridion Ethicum*—he drew so heavily. At times, he himself comments upon their excesses. Of Marcus Aurelius he says, for instance, that “so ally’d he thinks the Soul unto God, as to call it a dismembred Parcel of him: altho herein he spoke but little as a Philosopher.”²⁸ More certainly is poles removed from the haughty arrogance with which Montaigne, among countless others, charged the Stoics. The virtual self-deification which suffuses Seneca’s epistles or segments of Aurelius’ *Meditations* with such a suffocating pride, he rejected categorically. More is aware that “alas, that which is a Creature cannot be God. For all that he can have must be by Participation, and through the help of Virtue, which (as all confess) is a sort of Divine Nature and God-like Life.”²⁹ But even after thus modifying More’s position, we are still faced with the realization that the fundamental distinction—final and absolute—between God and all else, man included, between the Creator and the creature, was grasped by More—when grasped at all—only inadequately. The qualitative difference between virtue in God and man, the fact that human virtue can at most be only analogous to the divine, that being Godlike is not at all the same as being like God—these are often slurred over in More, are, at the very least, blurred. While reading him, one is often tempted to exclaim with Culverwel—that singular syncretic devotee of Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas—

How fond is the fancy of a semi-deity! . . . How proud is that soul that aspires to be a god! Is it not enough for a soul to approach unto his God, to see His face, to enjoy His presence, to be like unto Him, to

²⁷ *Ench. Eth.*, III.iii.17.

²⁸ *Ench. Eth.*, II.v.7.

²⁹ *Ench. Eth.*, III.iii.15.

be knit unto Him, in love and affection? Happiness doth advance a creature to its just perfection, but it doth not lift it above the sphere of its being. A glorified being is still a subservient and finite being. A soul, when in its full brightness, yet still is but 'the candle of the Lord.' Let it come as it can, yet it will be infinitely distant from Him. Heaven doth not mix and blend essences together, but keeps them all in their just beauty and proportions; so that take a creature in what condition you will, and it is not the least particle of a deity.³⁰

We should not underestimate the seriousness of the issue. We are not merely dealing with the accusation (if accusation it be) of Pelagianism which, with considerable justice, has so often been hurled at humanism. Pelagius only asserted that man can take the initiative in moving along the path of *human* virtue. He did not declare that man does or can promenade in celestial boulevards. He held man could climb the ladder of virtue through the exercise of his own faculties, but he did not necessarily assume that, upon reaching the pinnacle, man would scale the walls of Heaven.³¹ The dictum More cited from Cicero—"Virtus eadem in homine ac Deo est"—goes considerably further than Pelagianism, then. It eviscerates—almost obliterates—the basic distinction between man and his Maker. In so doing, it establishes a close similarity between them, thus determining the proximate character of their relation. It remains of course a relation of unequals, and consequently unequal. Complete surrender on the part of man is by no means precluded, is indeed, in More, insisted upon. But the unicity of God and the resultant uniqueness of man's relation to Him—totally dissimilar from any mere political or social relation—are definitely minimized, if not, indeed, overlooked.

Such a position is thoroughly characteristic of More. One of the most typical qualities of his mind is its almost congenital aversion for hard and fast distinction. He is ever seeking to harmonize, ever

³⁰ *Light of Nature*, pp. 141–142. Culverwel's criticism is chiefly directed at the Stoics, but he also attacks the Neoplatonists, especially their doctrine of pre-existence which, like Taylor, he sees as leading to self-deification. For a general discussion of this problem in connection with English Renaissance literature—especially poetry—see G. W. O'Brien, *Renaissance Poetics and the Problem of Power* (Chicago, 1956).

³¹ Conversely, one could abolish all real qualitative distinctions between man and God, and yet conceivably hold that only God acts in bringing about man's salvation, just as one man may raise another from a ditch.

striving to reconcile. He may synthesize or he may compromise, but he is always in search of integration, which, in More, is not only a principle but a propensity. It thus extends beyond the confines of his specifically theological concerns. As a case in point, we might instance his attitude towards Descartes, who—with his basic sharp dichotomy between mind and matter, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*—offers, in this respect, a striking contrast with More.³² It will be recalled that Hobbes—accepted by posterity as Descartes' chief contemporary rival—denied the existence of spirit entirely. Reality he limited to matter and motion, and all else he consigned to the realm of fantasy. The opposing Cartesian position holds that spirit is as real as matter, indeed more so; but it saves the spiritual realm only by separating it absolutely from the material order; by holding that the two are not only distinct, but disjunct; by asserting, in short, that as regards the world of appearances which is the domain of science, Hobbes is right. The earth—the cosmos—is mechanism's, and spirit can only exist in banished exile. More can accept neither solution, and he adopts an intermediate position.³³ That spirit exists he asserts with incessant emphasis. But he insists that, like matter, it has extension; it is rather distinguished from body by being "indiscernible," which corporeal matter is not. In other words, the existence of spirit is indeed to be maintained, but only after it has been cast into a materialistic mold. Little wonder that Hobbes is reported to have stated "That if his own Philosophy was not True, he knew of none that he should sooner like than More's of Cambridge."³⁴ Masson took the remark as Hobbes's jocose way of pointing up the

³² Maritain has indeed suggested that the tendency towards bifurcation is an integral element of Descartes' mind, governing his approach to virtually all major problems; see his *Dream of Descartes*, p. 142.

³³ The major *loci classici* in which More's views on the nature of spirits and the relation of God to space are developed, are *Henrici Mori Epistolae Quatuor ad Renatum Des-Cartes*, in *Philosophical Writings*, passim; *Ant. Ath.*, I.iv.3; *App. Ant. Ath.*, iii; *Epistola ad V. C.*, in *Philosophical Writings*, passim; *Imm. Soul*, I.iii–viii; and especially *Div. Dia.*, pp. 30–82; *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, passim; and "Answer to a Learned Psychopirist," passim. More's attitude towards Descartes is discussed in the studies of English Cartesianism and of More's scientific thought cited in the bibliographical essay, and in Anderson, *Liberal Religion*, pp. 119–178; Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, II, 368–397; and Willey, *Seventeenth Century*, pp. 161–169.

³⁴ Quoted in Ward, *Life*, p. 80.

truth of his own system by declaring that the only alternative was the jumbled theosophy of More. But surely John Laird came closer to the mark when he wrote that "cette affirmation voulait dire brièvement qu'un matérialiste peut admettre l'esprit comme étant une dimension nouvelle de corps, mais ne pourrait jamais accepter la réalité d'un esprit entièrement dénué d'étendue."³⁵ Ultimately, More was led to postulate the divine character of space in order to vitiate the most basic distinction of all, to close, as it were, the final remaining gap. In his early correspondence with Descartes,³⁶ he had already spoken of God himself as being extended, and as he grew older, he developed this position further, ultimately regarding the totality of extension as a realization of the divine presence. Malebranche's apotheosis of space More never adopted, but he did hold that space or extension constitutes the "divine amplitude," or a manifestation of God. In the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, in which this position is most fully developed, he lists no fewer than twenty attributes common to extension and divinity.³⁷

³⁵ David Masson, *Life of Milton*, VI, 305, and John Laird, "L'influence de Descartes sur la philosophie anglaise du XVII^e siècle," *Revue Philosophique* 123 (1937), 243, respectively.

³⁶ See *Epistola Prima H. More ad R. Cartesium*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 62; trans. in Anderson, *Liberal Religion*, p. 133.

³⁷ See *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, viii.7, and Burt, *Foundations*, p. 146. More's position was subsequently attacked by Berkeley in his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, ed. T. E. Jessop, in *Works*, II, 94 and n., and in *Siris*, in *Works*, V, 126-127. A. A. Wolf, *A History of Science . . . in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries*, 2nd ed. (London, 1950), p. 666, holds that "the origin of this conception of space must be sought in Jewish mystical literature, in which God is described as 'the space of the world' (Genesis Rabba, 68, 9), and also as 'filling the whole world, as the soul fills the body' (Leviticus Rabba, 4, 8)." Wolf's conjecture seems to me erroneous. The phrase *mkomo sel olam* is properly translated as "the place—or location, basis, and ground—of the world," and it is specifically employed by the Midrash (hardly mystical, by the way) to express the idea that the world is contained in God, derives from Him, and is His instrument, rather than vice-versa (*hu mkomo sel olam u'ein olamo mkomo*). As to the second reference, in itself it expresses little more than a belief in divine immanence, which is by no means to be confused with a belief in divine extension. Wolf would have a valid point only if the Midrash (the original source is actually *Talmud Bavli*, *Berachoth* 10a) held the soul to be extended—which it does not. A cabbalistic source for More's view of space is suggested (though virtually no evidence is adduced) by Jammer, *Concepts of Space*, pp. 46-57. But, as Jammer apparently realizes, if More did derive his theory from the Cabbala, it was only as a result of misinterpretation.

Moving a bit closer to theology, we find a similar tendency governing More's attempt to grapple with the age-old problem of immanence and transcendence. More characteristically groped towards some sort of compromise and he found one in the doctrine of an *anima mundi*, which he inherited from Platonist fore-runners and which he was later to transmit to Yeats. As More conceived it, the doctrine stated that the world was animated by an unconscious soul which determined the development of the matter within it. This *anima mundi* or "the Spirit of Nature," as More preferred to call it, is defined as "a substance incorporeal, but without Sense and Animadversion, pervading the whole Matter of the Universe, and exercising a Plastical power therein, according to the sundry predispositions and occasions in the parts it works upon, raising such Phaenomena in the World, by directing the parts of the Matter and their Motion, as cannot be resolved into mere Mechanical powers."³⁸ The assumption of the existence of such a buffer enabled More to reject absolute mechanism while yet absolving God of direct responsibility for nature's imperfections;³⁹ and it illustrates once again his unwillingness—perhaps his inability—to accept a fundamental distinction.

Characteristic or not, More's aversion for absolute distinction must, from our own point of view, certainly be seen as weakening his religious position considerably. For the need for such distinction is one of which we have once again become keenly aware. If one may momentarily indulge in a sweeping generalization, it may be said that—partly, because of the indefinite character of much Romantic philosophy; partly, because of the pervasive influence of the concepts of evolution and development; partly, because of the immense respect almost universally accorded to

³⁸ *Imm. Soul*, III.xii.1.

³⁹ "That God is not the immediate Maker of the Bodies the particular miscarriages demonstrate. For there is no Matter so perverse and stubborn but his Omnipotency could tame; whence there would be no Defects nor Monstrosities in the generation of Animals" (*Imm. Soul*, II.x.2). The same point was repeatedly made by Cudworth, who advanced a similar doctrine of "plastic nature." He asserts that the opinion that God does everything in nature immediately is confuted "by those *hamartemata* (as Aristotle calls them) those errors and bungles which are committed when the matter is inept and contumacious" (*Intellectual System*, I, 223). See also Raven, *Natural Religion*, I, 112–117. For more general discussions of seventeenth-century theories of plastic nature, see the studies cited in the bibliographical essay.

uniplanar natural law—whatever distinctions most nineteenth-century thinkers recognized tended to be merely quantitative, differences of degree rather than of kind. In our own century, however, the need for qualitative distinction has once again been recognized—certainly, among religious thinkers. Over forty years have elapsed since T. E. Hulme urged the need for recognizing “absolute discontinuity.” “Our principal concern then at the present moment,” he jotted down in a notebook, “should be the re-establishment of the temper or disposition of mind which can look at a *gap* or chasm without shuddering.”⁴⁰ And the concern has not been neglected. The rediscovery—one might almost say, the discovery—of Kierkegaard, with his “qualitative distinction between time and eternity,” and the dominant influence of Barth and Brunner, with their emphasis upon “transcendence,” have once again placed Kant’s “Rigoristen” in the limelight, have re-established qualitative distinction—final and absolute—as a fundamental intellectual mode. And the revival is certainly to be welcomed. For, even while deploring its occasionally excessive emphasis, we must recognize that, in certain areas, qualitative distinction is indispensable. Certainly, with respect to morality and religion, any blurring of position must be categorically rejected, on both metaphysical and psychological grounds. A sense of the unique “otherness” of God—and consequently of the *sui generis* character of man’s relation to Him—must be seen as a fundamental element of any truly profound religious consciousness. Whether we regard it, like Otto, as a specific single emotion, or whether, with a speaker in a modern “Platonic” dialogue, we consider it rather as a unique “emotional pattern or value-structure,”⁴¹ we must recognize that the emotional response in religion is qualitatively distinct; and we might recognize further, that a sense of this uniqueness permeates the deepest religious spirits. And it should be emphasized that this sense is by no means

⁴⁰ T. E. Hulme, *Speculations*, ed. Herbert Read, 2nd ed. (London, 1936), p. 4.

⁴¹ John Laird, *Morals and Western Religion* (London, 1931), p. 8. “The constituent emotions are not cut off with a hatchet; but, contrariwise, the totality of the significant structure pervades each and every temporary or modal constituent. Religious loyalty may therefore very well be unique and *sui generis*, although dogs are also loyal in their non-religious way” (p. 9).

limited to thinkers dominated by a feeling of the remoteness of God or principally impressed by His "terrible" aspect. It is precisely the great mystics—they who speak so fervently of the warmth of divine love—who recognize so clearly the unicity of God; who are overwhelmed by a sense of their own nihility in the face of the transcendent majesty of their Creator; who, furthermore, are aware of *una nocha oscura* in which God does indeed assume the aspect of a *Deus absconditus*; who, so far from denying the "daunting" element of God, rather see it as ever-present, only, as it were, sublimated to the divine mercy, the energy of wrathful *orge* itself being transmuted into love; and who, all the while, are imbued with—nay, overpowered by—a sense of the absolute chasm between man and God, the qualitatively unique "wholly other."

II

The overriding emphasis upon the proximity of God and man and the consequent failure to appreciate the uniqueness of their relation have wide ramifications. At once the most obvious and most important is a loss of the sense of "mystery" so intimately related to an awareness of the "otherness" of God. The sense of what Otto⁴² has in our own century designated the "numinous"—the sense of a unique and transcendent, at once daunting and fascinating, "*mysterium tremendum*"—declined patently after the Restoration, as the ethical phase of religion became dominant. Toland was hardly alone in seeking to banish the element of mystery from the English religious scene. The increasingly dominant emphasis upon plainness and simplicity—closely allied, of course, to the new science—"clarified" both religion and its Object. Where the Puritans had emphasized what More called the "imperscrutability" of God, religious thinkers now focused almost exclusive attention upon His clear and rational elements, those which it was presumed man shared with Him. Theologians—sometimes despite themselves—began to speak as if God could be not only apprehended but comprehended. The element of the unique and "wholly other," peculiar to God and to Him alone, was generally vitiated, as only the aspect which God and man

⁴² See his *Idea of the Holy*, *passim*.

were presumed to have in common now occupied the limelight.

At bottom, we are confronted, once more, by the breakdown of qualitative distinction. The breakdown—largely aided, no doubt, by the quantitative character of Newtonian science—⁴³ may be noted in various areas, but we might best consider it with respect to a problem over which so much ink was spilt in the period—the problem of revelation. For properly understood, the gradual deterioration of the concept of revelation is directly related to the inadequate grasp of absolute qualitative distinction. To be sure, the issue is most naturally associated with the deistic controversy. But the sufficiency of a natural religion, with its three or five principles, is not the heart of the matter. The essential question is *not* whether one believes the contents of the Bible to be true, nor even whether one acknowledges their divine origin. It is whether one recognizes their divine *character*. Belief in revelation does not consist merely in the acceptance of certain revealed truths, but also—and chiefly—in the concomitant realization that these truths are of a supernatural order of knowledge surpassing the range of human reason—undiscovered and undiscoverable. And this not simply because they happen to be hidden by a screen, upon the removal of which they are seen on our level, but because they are essentially beyond our ken, as deriving from an absolutely different plane of truth. It is in the recognition that the content of revelation is qualitatively unique that the essence of revealed religion consists.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the sense of revelation

⁴³ See M. L. Wiley, *The Subtle Knot* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), pp. 227–256, who notes that, while a number of seventeenth-century thinkers saw the union of disparate elements as resulting from a paradoxical union despite their firm distinction, in the eighteenth century the tendency was rather to minimize the distinction altogether, and to see the union as a sort of compromise.

⁴⁴ One should keep in mind, however, the fundamental and indispensable distinction made by Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 1; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 9–14) between two elements of revelation—the *revelatum* and the *revelabile*. The latter term refers to those parts of Scripture whose “revealed” character derives from the accident of their having been revealed. While accessible to human reason, they were nevertheless revealed for a specific reason, e.g., because not all would bother to discover them by their rational faculties. The revealed character of the *revelatum*, by contrast, derives from its very essence, as it contains truths which, being above human reason, had to be revealed, if they were to be known at all. See Gilson, *Le Thomisme* (Paris, 1947), pp. 20–25, and *Reason and Revelation in the*

as an experience and a power, as an active factor transfusing and transmuting human personality, can be fully appreciated only where the unique character of revelation is recognized. Sweep away its qualitative distinction, and the peculiar efficacy of revelation is virtually obscured. The Word becomes an oracular history book.

And sweep away the distinction, Restoration religious thinkers often did. Already in Glanvill⁴⁵ we may note both the propensity to regard revelation as "Matters of Testimony"—information essentially on a par with human historical and geographical knowledge—and the consequent tendency to (*salve reverentia*) weigh its credibility. But it is in Locke's discussion of faith and reason that these are fully manifested. Faith, "founded on the testimony of God (who cannot lie)," consists in the belief—grounded, Locke insists, upon reason's recognizing the divine origin of the book—"that such or such a proposition, to be found in such and such a book, is of divine inspiration."⁴⁶ And the "propositions" Locke treats very much like human knowledge. To be sure, he recognizes that revelation contains truths which are "above reason." But these are apparently "above reason" not as a result of any intrinsic constitutional difference, but simply because they are below the horizon, veiled from sight. Scripture is thus nothing more than "a collection of writings, designed by God, for the instruction of

Middle Ages, pp. 69–85. The present remarks refer, of course, to the *revelatum*, although, to an extent, the *power* of revelation could be felt even through the *revelabile*, as a result of the bare experience of receiving it. It might be added that, while Aquinas developed the distinction, it did not remain peculiar to him. It was clearly accepted by Scotus—see Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot* (Paris, 1952), p. 39 and n.—and closely followed by Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, I, xii–xvi. From a somewhat different point of view, there are some perceptive remarks on the subject in Emil Brunner's *Revelation and Reason*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia, 1946), pp. 23–28.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., his statement that the truths "of pure Revelation; Reason cannot prove them immediately; nor is it expected that it should. For they are Matters of Testimony; and we are no more to look for immediate proof from Reason of those things than we are to expect, that abstracted Reason should demonstrate, That there is such a place as China; or, that there was such a man as Julius Caesar: All that it can do here, is to assert and make good the credibility, and truth of the Testimonies that relate such Matters" ("The Agreement of Reason and Religion," in *Essays*, p. 10).

⁴⁶ Locke, *Essay*, IV.xviii.6.

the illiterate bulk of mankind, in the way of salvation.”⁴⁷ We are just a step away from the “defense” of revelation set forth in Samuel Clarke’s Boyle Lectures of 1705. To Clarke, natural and revealed religion are virtually coincident, revelation being little more than a republication of natural religion, necessitated—and here we return to the “democratic” problem—by the fact that few can or do develop for themselves the self-sufficient truths of natural religion. The particulars of revelation, Clarke readily admits, are not all discoverable by human reason; but taken as a whole, the scheme of revelation reaches no further than that of natural religion. They are merely two paths leading to the same destination, only the superhighway of revelation is better lit and more readily accessible.⁴⁸ The failure to grasp the qualitative difference between revealed and ordinary truths has thus inexorably led to the virtual identification of natural and revealed religion. Is it then surprising that a Tindal, a Collins, or a Bolingbroke should shortly seek to reject revelation altogether? Once the “mysterium” in God had been thoroughly rationalized, the specific demands of His revelation could not but soon seem arbitrary, artificial, and unnecessary.

As to the appreciation—or rather, depreciation—of the element

⁴⁷ *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, in *Works* (London, 1823), VII, 5.

⁴⁸ See Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation*, 6th ed. (London, 1724), pp. 122–167. Of course, I do not mean to say that the distinction between the essential respective characters of reason and revelation was wholly forgotten. One might point for instance to Norris’ *An Account of Reason and Faith*, 13th ed. (London, 1728). Thomist that he is, Norris criticizes Boyle for saying that the truths above reason are mysteries in that they are undiscoverable by natural reason. Actually, says Norris, they are, even after their discovery through revelation, incomprehensible (pp. 71–75). Norris also entitles a chapter, “That Human Reason Is not the Measure of Truth” (ch. iv), and he realizes, furthermore, that the inability to appreciate the nature of revelation stems from the deeper failure to perceive the qualitative distinction between man and God. Those who cavil at revelation, he writes, do so because of the fact “that either they think too meanly of God, or too highly of themselves; that either they ascribe something Human to his Nature, or something Divine to their own; . . . in one word, that either they Humanize God, or Deify themselves and their own Rational Abilities” (pp. 7–8). But Norris is rather the exception; as a rule, the true nature of revelation was very imperfectly understood in the period.

of "tremendum," the daunting aspect in God, we again find a tendency toward thoroughgoing rational "clarification." "Speaking broadly," writes Basil Willey,

we are confronted, on approaching the eighteenth century, with a steady decline in what has been called the tragic sense of life. We have gone on too long, it was felt, repeating that we are miserable offenders, and that there is no health in us. We must change these notes to something more cheerful, something more befitting a polite and civilized age . . . Exorcize from religion, therefore, its sombre and tragic elements—its jealous and offended God, its conviction of sin . . . Against the *Deus absconditus*, the *Dieu irrité* of Pascal, Shaftesbury puts forward a deity who is "the best-natured Being in the world." "What a charming Idea does he give us of the Deity," says Collins of Tillotson: "it is alone sufficient, without any further Argument, to make the Atheist wish there were a Deity."⁴⁹

The religion of "good-nature" ascribed the quality to both God and man. In its concern with benevolence and affability, it conveniently overlooked both the shudder in the human spine and the ire of a wrathful Deity.

Many of the influences contributing to the decline of the "numinous" aspect of religion More and his fellow-Platonists combated; and yet I think it cannot be denied that they contributed to that decline themselves. Their constant emphasis upon the similarity—nay, the close kinship—of God and man, upon their common ethical and rational natures, and upon their equal subjection to an objective moral law—this emphasis, unaccompanied by any concomitant acknowledgment of the uniquely divine character or of the fact that human virtue can, at best, be only *analogous* to the divine, could not but help break down the sense of the "wholly other" aspect in God, of the element of mystery in Him. In Whichcote, this tendency is further heightened by a keen suspicion of anything which smacks of obscurity. "The more Mysterious," he declares, "the more Imperfect: That, which is mystically spoken, is but half spoken: As Darkness is, in compare with light; so is Mystery, in comparison with Knowledge."⁵⁰ But even in thinkers more sympathetic toward the "mystically

⁴⁹ *Eighteenth Century Background*, pp. 10–11.

⁵⁰ *Aphorisms*, no. 1014.

spoken," the tendency could be sufficiently potent. More certainly appreciated it warmly; and yet we have seen how far he, too, went in rejecting the "otherness" of God.

Similarly, the sense of the awesome and the awful, of a *Deus absconditus* and a *Dieu irrité*, is very much weakened in the Platonists. "The Religious," says Whichcote, "represent God to themselves as Amiable; the Superstitious represent God to themselves, as Formidable."⁵¹ Smith follows Cicero in defining superstition as "'an over-timorous and dreadful apprehension of the Deity,'" and sees its true cause as "indeed nothing else but a false opinion of the Deity, that renders him dreadful and terrible, as being rigorous and imperious."⁵² More, no doubt under the influence of his apocalyptic studies, has a far keener sense of divine wrath. But despite occasional Wigglesworthian passages depicting "a fiery Whirlwind and Tempest of Vengeance" rattling upon the damned tumbling "in the Lake of Brimstone burning with Fire,"⁵³ More is, on the whole, very much at ease in Zion. His overmastering concern with maintaining the essential rational goodness of God—sometimes taking the most curious forms⁵⁴—generally tended to obscure the sense of an overwhelming divine *majestas*. When More does speak of divine vengeance, he apparently has not the slightest thought that it might bear upon *him* in any way; it is upon the apostates that he sees fire and brimstone being poured, and he hardly feels any tremor over *their* fate.

Thus, in turning to consider the subjective aspect of the elements of awe and fear in religious experience, we find that More's appreciation of them is, to say the least, imperfect. Upon Vaughan's exclamation, "Good Lord deliver us," he comments,

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, no. 947.

⁵² Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 26. The inner quote is from Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, I.xlii.

⁵³ See *Myst. G.*, VI.x.5, and *Div. Dia.*, p. 520.

⁵⁴ For instance, one of the standard arguments in favor of the pre-existence of souls was that, since existence is good for the soul, and God is infinitely good, then we should not assume that He would withhold any benefit from it. The argument is not limited to More, incidentally, but is advanced by all the proponents of the pre-existence of souls. Consequently, much of the debate turned on the question of the nature of God. In our own century, however, McTaggart (*Some Dogmas of Religion*, pp. 112–115) has held that immortality may be argued for on both ethical and metaphysical grounds, but pre-existence only on the latter.

"How the man is frightened into devotion by the smut and griminess of his own imagination!"⁵⁵ And again, when Vaughan declares, "I fear God," More rejoins that "the devils also believe and tremble: But do'st thou love God, my Philalethes?"⁵⁶ He shows little awareness of any religious fear or awe which is not merely a natural cringing terror. Thus, in stating that "God is the most highly and most truly magnified and glorified" in the exaltation of "the Divine Life," More adds—"and not in the dark and unintelligible Exercise of an irresistible Power. By which no other Acts of Devotion can be stirred up in us than a certain Fear and Stupour, such as seizes upon poor astonished Cattle in Storms and Lightnings, or mighty land-floods, that carry them they know not whither."⁵⁷ He likewise does not appear to have been imbued with a keen perception of sin. For the Platonists—and despite his early spiritual struggles, More included—belong, psychologically, to what James called the "once-born" category of religious personalities. Whichcote—Westcott⁵⁸ to the contrary notwithstanding—shows little of the darker side of life. Smith, if we are to judge by his *Discourses* (and we have little else to go on), was clearly one of the "sons of light." In More, the sense of sin is, to be sure, somewhat sharper; he has a good deal to say of the animal life as well as the divine. And yet, despite his admiration for Spenser, he never absorbed the latter's constantly acute awareness of evil as a corrosive agent, debasing man's essential character and contaminating his entire personality; his penetrating sense of "Inward corruption, and infected sin . . . / Close creeping twixt the marrow and the skin."⁵⁹ More neither recognized the full qualitative import of sin, nor was he saturated with a consciousness of its perpetual peril. The optimism which generally pervades his writings extends over the psychological realm as well as the cosmic. Ward speaks of his work as being full of "High Life and Joy," and quotes More himself as having said "that if he was to live his whole time over again, he would do just, for the main, as he had done." Perhaps most revealing is yet another citation out

⁵⁵ *Observations*, p. 85.

⁵⁶ *Second Lash*, p. 237.

⁵⁷ "Preface," in *Theological Works*, p. ii.

⁵⁸ See B. F. Westcott, "Benjamin Whichcote," in *Essays in the History of Religious Thought in the West* (London, 1891), p. 378.

⁵⁹ *The Faerie Queene*, I.x.25.

of Ward in which More "said once to a Friend, and yet without all Boast, concerning Himself, viz. That he did not remember, that in many Years he had done any thing that was really evil. Though at other times he hath told him, How that he felt sometimes the corrupt Principle at a Distance from him, as with a long Pole; or like Thunder afar off."⁶⁰ Though!!! Donne and Dr. Johnson wrestled with "the corrupt Principle" at somewhat closer quarters. And they found him not "a long Pole," but a dagger thrusting at the inner chambers of the heart; not "Thunder afar off," but lightning striking at the very roots of their being. Speaking of the Cambridge Platonists as a group, a recent historian has asserted that "they trod seldom in the deep, dark ravines, where sin is fought and redemption is found a vital need";⁶¹ and the statement may be applied, substantially, to More. For the most significant aspect of his "integration" and his acceptance of nature is, after all, his acceptance of *human* nature. Like Whichcote—who never tired of repeating the point—he holds that virtue is natural to the soul, vice unnatural. It is therefore, he tells us, that the soul rejoices in virtue—"For the Philosophers make Pleasure, in its very Definition to be, 'The Restitution to a Natural State.' But surely, the most Natural State of that which partakes of Reason, must be Virtue."⁶² To be sure, More's is not a blandly facile optimism. His view is based on a profound religious vision of the soul's greatness rather than a blindness to its faults. But the fact remains that his sense of sin is very far from pervasive, and in most instances, not even acute.

The Platonists' cast of mind is typified by their attitude toward the element of "struggle" in religion. With respect to the question—debated by moralists from Aristotle down—as to whether temperance, in which no temptation is felt, or continence, in which temptation is felt but defeated, is superior, the Platonists are clearly on the side of temperance. Shaftesbury spoke for virtually the whole school when he posited a "natural" morality as the highest form of virtue.⁶³ On the whole, the Platonists are prin-

⁶⁰ *Life*, pp. 55, 77, and 133.

⁶¹ S. C. Carpenter, *The Church in England, 597-1688* (London, 1954), p. 383.

⁶² *Ench. Eth.*, III.iii.14.

⁶³ See his *Inquiry*, in *Characteristics*, II, 243-258. The distinction between

cipally concerned with the lofty ideals they envision rather than with the plodding means of attaining them. With what has been called "the psychology of spiritual effort," they bear little affinity. They yearn longingly for the soul's lost deiform state, but the process of its recovery they generally regard as not so much a glorious challenge as a necessary evil. One constantly senses an intimation that things would have been much better if man could have avoided the struggle altogether. Now that man *has* been cast into the crucible, a swift exit is seen as desirable. Thus, after declaring that "God takes no delight in the perpetual rack" of human souls, More states that "to be dead [to our own will] is easement; but to be still [i.e., always] dying is pain: and it is most ordinarily but the due punishment of halting and hypocrisy."⁶⁴ Characteristic is the Platonists' attitude towards free will. "*Liberrum arbitrium*," says Whichcote, "which men so brag of; as it includes *Posse male agere*, is an Imperfection: for such liberty or power is not in God. To do amiss, is not Power; but Deficiency and Deformity: and infinite Power includes not in it a Possibility of Evil."⁶⁵ Cudworth see free will as "a mongrel compound of

the temperate (*sophron*) and the continent (*enkrates*) man was clearly defined by Aristotle—*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1151b, and *Magna Moralia*, 1203b, in *Works*, trans. W. D. Ross et al. (Oxford, 1915), vol. IX—but he was not much concerned with preferring one or the other. Subsequently, however, the question of precedence was widely discussed. The best-known Renaissance discussion is that which takes place in Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby (London: Everyman, 1948), pp. 269–271. In modern times, discussion has centered around Kantian ethics with its emphasis upon motive as the sole criterion of morality, and its concomitant insistence that only obedience to the moral law be considered a proper motive, while all inclinations—e.g., the emotion of pity or natural benevolence—must be disregarded in truly moral action. The position was pushed even further by, of all people, William James, who, in defining "ideal or moral action" as "action in the line of greatest resistance" (*Principles of Psychology*, II, 549), held that, in moral action, inclination must be not only disregarded but contravened. This view naturally suggests the contention advanced by Bradley in *Appearance and Reality*, 2nd ed. (London, 1902), pp. 430–436, 500, 508–509, that moral being and moral action are incompatible, and that the moral life thus involves an insoluble contradiction; as soon as you achieve moral victory, you become non-moral. Bradley's argument is brilliantly discussed and refuted in the final chapter of the first volume of A. E. Taylor's *Faith of a Moralist*, I, 386–434.

⁶⁴ "Defence," iii.1.

⁶⁵ *Aphorisms*, no. 13.

perfection and imperfection.”⁶⁶ And as for More, even as he is undertaking a defense of human liberty, we find him declaring that it is a defect rather than a virtue. Asking “Whether Virtue gets into Men by Custom, or by Nature, or by some Divine Fate,” he asserts that

there are some Men extremely scandaliz’d at the Affirmative Part of this Question; as thinking it a derogation from Humane Nature, to make Men at this rate necessarily Good, and to deprive them of all Free-Will. For they judg a Thing voluntarily done, to be of far different Merit from what happens by Compulsion: Which yet (I confess) sounds to me; as if God, who is Good, should be the less Adorable, because he cannot be Naught . . . Were there but a Race of such Men; they were of all others the most fitted for Heroes; and as deriving Virtue from the Gods.⁶⁷

More is not fully consistent on this point; there are passages—notably in the *Divine Dialogues*⁶⁸—in which he declares that “a competent measure of Tribulation and Distress” is essential to the spiritual life. Fundamentally, however, More’s derogation of free will represents the basic texture of his thought. It reflects his essentially “once-born” psychology, one whose “healthy-mindedness” vitiates its consciousness of the “mysterium tremendum.”

It may be rejoined that the Platonists’ once-born mold—their weakened sense of sin, their failure to appreciate the “numinous”—is simply the obverse side of their undoubtedly laudable emphasis upon deiformity. And this is unquestionably true. But we must recognize that it is the result of a one-sided emphasis. The profoundest religious consciousness is aware of both its deiformity and of the abyss between itself and its Creator—and what is more, it is aware of them simultaneously. Religious experience revolves around the polarity of a dual sense of love and fear—of the caressing warmth pervading the soul in the embrace of its Maker, and the penetrating shudder piercing its inner sanctum as it surveys the impassable and unfathomable gulf between man and God. This polarity derives from the paradox of man’s own twofold nature—man, that “monstre incompréhensible” of Pascal, who is

⁶⁶ Quoted in Passmore, *Cudworth*, p. 62. See also Cudworth, *Free Will*, pp. 42–47.

⁶⁷ *Ench. Eth.*, III.i.2.

⁶⁸ See, e.g., pp. 99, 102–103, 159, and *Myst. G.*, II.viii.6.

"ni ange ni bête" not because he is between angel and beast but because he is both. And the two poles are, again, experienced simultaneously—"and rejoice with trembling." The Platonists' "once-born" psychology, then, is rooted, certainly, in their emphasis upon deiformity; but it results from their concurrent failure to take complementary elements into account. It derives not so much from their accentuating the deiformity of man, as from their neglecting the "mysterium tremendum" of God.

In view of More's spiritualistic and apocalyptic interests as well as his authorship of the *Mystery of Godliness* and the *Mystery of Iniquity*, the statement that the element of "mystery" is somewhat lacking in him will no doubt fall strangely upon many ears. But it should be pointed out first, that apocalyptic texts certainly, spiritualistic apparitions possibly, may be abstruse and obscure but not mysterious. The term "mystery," in our sense, properly applies not to what happens to be unknown but to what is intrinsically unknown and unknowable. Secondly, whatever we may think of them, More did not consider apocalypics and spiritualism to be mysterious at all. In presenting a list of iconisms—formulas to be used in interpreting prophecies—More declares that, with their aid, interpretation will be as easy as translating from one language to another.⁶⁹ As to apparitions, both More and Glanvill considered them empirical phenomena worthy of scientific investigation.⁷⁰ In describing spirit in his *Immortality of the Soul*, More repeatedly emphasizes that the concept is at least as clear as that of body, and in the final book, he presents clear precise details describing the probable social, political, religious, and even recreational activities of post-mortal spirits. The element of "mystery" in More's two longest works is somewhat more important, particularly inasmuch as More himself emphasizes the need for it as a means to adding "venerability" and leading to greater reverence and adoration.⁷¹ But three brief comments must be made. First, there is absolutely no intention here of contending that the element of mystery is entirely lacking in More, but rather

⁶⁹ See *Synopsis Prophetica*, I.ix.15.

⁷⁰ See M. E. Prior, "Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth Century Science," *MP* 30 (1932), 167-193.

⁷¹ See *Myst. G.*, I.i-ii, and IX.i.4, and *Synopsis Prophetica*, I.ii.

that it is relatively weak. Secondly, if More includes obscurity as one of the four characteristics of a mystery, he also includes intelligibility (the other two are truth and usefulness). And finally, More's mystery is generally closer to obscurity; it is particularly related to specific doctrines of revealed religion and only derivatively to God. This is very different from an immediate perception of God as a "wholly other" *mysterium*.

III

In connection with the problem of morality and religion, it is this question of the qualitative character of the religious relation that is most crucial. For it confronts us with the problem of the very essence—the "quiddity," as the logicians would say—of religion, leading us to ask whether it is not, generically, just another species of morality. But although this aspect is the most fundamental, and, ultimately, has the most serious consequences, it remains relatively abstract. We may now, however, venture to observe the post-Restoration confusion of morality and religion in a somewhat cruder and more concrete form—through a consideration of their respective points of reference, or their objects. Here we encounter a point which is, in many respects, obvious. It requires little analysis to discover that the object of religion is God, and the object of morality man. This antithesis is only clear, however, when we deal with morality and religion in their pure, ideal form. But the moment we descend from this abstract plane to the level of reality, we are confronted with subtler problems—the differentiation of shades of emphasis and the discernment of nuances of motivation. For on the level of concrete reality, religion—in its totality—includes duties to both God and man, or, to adopt Whichcote's favorite tripartite division—to God, to ourselves, and to others. It is not, then, solely—or even primarily—with establishing the immediate object of an action that we must be concerned, but rather with determining the ultimate point of reference. Where religion is fully developed, the religious motive becomes all-embracing, and it refers *all* human actions to God, each being performed for His sake and for His sake alone. There will, of course, necessarily be other immediate short-term motives; but they are themselves, in turn, subsumed under the one en-

compassing religious moment. Where religion has been vitiated somewhat, however, the ultimate end of moral action—I repeat, of *all* action—may become obscured. From emphasizing that morality is an essential aspect of religion, we may subtly shift toward assuming that it is religion itself. We may adopt—perhaps unwittingly—the notion that altruism is an adequate substitute—nay, we might not even realize it *is* a substitute—for religion; that a surrender to humanity and the moral law may take the place of a surrender to God. And then, once the point of reference has shifted, however much may be said about God, we have not religion but moralism.

Of all this More and his fellow-Platonists are fully aware. The taint of moralism is one with which they themselves certainly cannot be charged. They repeatedly emphasize that moral action must be undertaken with reference to God and in imitation of Him, and not for the sake of any tangible results that it might bring about. And yet again, as far as actual practice is concerned, it is to action with immediate reference to man that they exhort. If we conceive of religion as consisting of two aspects—one, involving our relation with God and the desire for His favor, and the second, our living in accordance with the divine archetype of virtue, it is clearly with the second that the Platonists are principally concerned. Theirs is, again, a partial view. Where an Augustine, for instance—influenced by both Neoplatonic idealism and the shattering experience of personal sin—is fired by the yearning for both deiformity and saving grace, the Cambridge men, with their emphasis upon ethical religion, are relatively oblivious to the latter. The burning desire for grace and salvation which scourges the very being of one class of religious personalities hardly touches them. They intimate that there is little need for applying oneself directly to the task of seeking divine favor; if one only lives properly, it can be trusted to follow—it will, it is often suggested, *ipso facto* have been achieved. “It is a more difficult work to Reconcile men to God; than to reconcile God to men,”⁷² and it is with the reconciliation and restoration of

⁷² Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, no. 398. The question of “reconciliation” was discussed at some length in the correspondence between Whichcote and Tuckney. They are concerned, however, with the efficient cause of human

men that the Platonists were principally concerned. Not being obsessed, furthermore, with a sense of sin or personal unworthiness, the Platonists feel no burning need for redemption; they feel rather a need for reformation. As a rational deity, God need not be appeased; He needs rather to be imitated. And this imitation centers around our duties to ourselves, and above all, to others. Thus, whatever their own ultimate point of reference, *in concretum*, it is moral and usually social activity serving the interests of humanity, which the Platonists urge.⁷³

We have already noted this tendency with respect to More in the preceding chapter, but we might add one further passage, this one from the original (1660) preface to the *Mystery of Godliness*. Speaking of the millennium, More states that "the true happiness of those days is not to be measured by Formalities or Opinions," but is to consist, on its speculative side, simply of belief in Scripture and its promises; for the rest, it is to be marked

by Devotion unfeigned, by Purity of Heart and Innocency of Life, by Faithfulness, by common Charity, by comfortable provisions for the poor, by chearful Obedience to our Superiours, and abundance of kindness and discreet condescensions one to another, by unspotted Righteousness and an unshaken Peace, by the removal of every unjust yoke, by mutual forbearance and bearing up one another as living stones of that Temple where there is not to be heard the noise of either axe or hammer, no squable or clamour about Formes or Opinions, but a peaceable study and endeavour of provoking one another to love and good works.⁷⁴

In many respects, it is, no doubt, an appealing passage; but its limitations are only too clearly evident. Of the knowledge of God, it says nothing, of the love of God not very much. It preaches rather the need for charity, obedience, kindness, and forbearance—in short, for the virtues of social morality.

reconciliation—whether it "nascitur e nobis" or must be effected by God—not with whether religion should concentrate upon reconciling God to man or vice-versa.

⁷³ Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*, p. 290: "Instead of beginning with the eternal mysteries of the inscrutable divine Will, they [i.e., the Cambridge Platonists] began with the fundamental nature of man . . . Their interest was thus psychological rather than theological." This is undoubtedly correct, but, once again, Jones refers to the center of immediate interest rather than the ultimate point of reference here under discussion.

⁷⁴ *Myst. G.* (1660), "Preface," sec. 19.

This practical concern with morality, More shares with his successors. Only in them, the point of reference is often changed. Tillotson is able to offer a definition of religion without so much as mentioning God; "it is," he asserts, "the thwarting and crossing of our vicious inclinations, the curing of our evil and corrupt affections, the due care and government of our unruly appetites and passions, the sincere endeavour and constant practice of all holiness and virtue in our lives."⁷⁵ One detects, furthermore, a growing tendency to assume that the advancement of the comfort of man *qua* man, that is, of his purely secular and temporal comfort, is the true aim of religion; that restraining oneself or aiding others are not immediate effects of religion but its ultimate object; that, in short, morality is not only a form but the content of religion. Thus we begin to hear a good deal of the "benefits" resulting from religion, of its "value" for the ordering of human life. The "advantages" of religion—the very phrase implies its subordination to some greater good—became a much-discussed topic. Tillotson preached one sermon on "The Advantages of Religion to Societies," a second on "The Advantages of Religion to Particular Persons," and in a third stated that "the laws of God are reasonable, that is, suitable to our nature and advantageous to our interest."⁷⁶ Cumberland—even while presumably refuting Hobbes—repeatedly points out the political value of religion in bringing order to society. Wilkins' *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* is, without exaggeration, one long descant on the theme that religion makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. Barrow delivered one sermon on "The Pleasantness of Religion," and two others on "The Profitableness of Godliness." Even Norris has a discourse entitled "The Importance of a Religious Life considered from the happy Conclusion of it,"⁷⁷ one in which temporal bene-

⁷⁵ Tillotson, *Sermons*, XI, 4-5.

⁷⁶ See, respectively, *Sermons*, I, 94-108, 109-128, and 154. For a defense of Tillotson, see L. G. Locke, *Tillotson: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Literature*, Anglistica IV (Copenhagen, 1954), p. 67.

⁷⁷ See Richard Cumberland, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Laws of Nature*, trans. John Towers (Dublin, 1750), "Preface," secs. 53, 58-9; John Wilkins, *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* (London, 1699), especially Bk. II; Barrow, *Theological Works*, I, 151-173, 174-201, and 202-233. (In the intermediate sermon—I, 174-201—Barrow actually compares religion to a business venture and shows how it is a worthwhile endeavor, even from the purely worldly viewpoint); and Norris, *Practical*

fits are mentioned quite prominently. And of course eighteenth-century religious literature is simply saturated with this theme. Kant declared that "the man who finds it needful, when his avowal is lawfully demanded, to look about him for some kind of [ulterior] end, is, by this very fact, already contemptible."⁷⁸ And F. H. Bradley once pointed out that simply asking "why should I be moral?" was, in itself, immoral, the very question reflecting the most crass utilitarianism.⁷⁹ Yet "why should I be religious?" is precisely the question that much Restoration theology set out to answer.

In only slightly modified form, one may note this religious utilitarianism in the inordinate emphasis placed by Restoration and eighteenth-century religious thought upon the doctrine of post-mortal rewards and punishments. The tendency towards what C. S. Lewis has called "theological hedonism"⁸⁰—or, to use our own author's more picturesque term, "Theological Hobbianisme"⁸¹—is quite pronounced throughout the period. Repeatedly we find various thinkers proclaiming that virtue must be pursued not only with the hope of reward but for its sake. The notion is most familiarly associated with the later Paley, in whom indeed it is found in an unusually crude form;⁸² but it is by no means

Discourses, 6th ed. (London, 1716), II, 96–117. On religious utilitarianism in Wilkins' *Principles*, see R. S. Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, 1958), pp. 121–124.

⁷⁸ *Religion*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ See the essay, "Why Should I Be Moral?" in *Ethical Studies*, pp. 58–81.

⁸⁰ See C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 189–190. Elsewhere, Lewis expressed his opposition to such hedonism in a succinct maxim, the essence of which he says he had learned from the nineteenth-century Idealists: "It is more important that Heaven should exist than that any of us should ever reach it" (*Surprised by Joy* [New York, 1955], p. 211).

⁸¹ See the "Praefatio Generalissima," quoted in translation in Ward, *Life*, p. 14, and "Select Letters," in Ward, *Life*, p. 287.

⁸² See, e.g., William Paley, *Moral and Political Philosophy*, in *Works*, ed. Edmund Paley (London, 1838), III, 30. Earlier in the work, Paley included the prudential motive in his very definition of virtue, defined as "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness" (III, 20). In reading him, one is sometimes almost reminded of that delightful caricature attributed to F. H. Bradley, in which he represents a believer as telling a group of sinners, "You sin now, we are going to sin hereafter" (quoted in Taylor, *Faith of a Moralist*, I, 288).

limited to him. Turning back once more to Tillotson, we may hear him delivering a sermon on "The Wisdom of Being Religious," in which he points out the expediency of undergoing brief temporal suffering rather than risking longer tribulations in the next world; or another entitled "The Wisdom of Religion," urging the need for considering future rewards and punishments in any "calculation and account of things"; or still a third, in which, undertaking to show how religion tends to "our happiness and interest," Tillotson asserts: "To begin with piety towards God. Nothing can more evidently tend to our interest, than to make him our friend upon whose favour our happiness depends."⁸³ And moving once again to the eighteenth century, we find even a Platonist like Berkeley arguing against the Stoic conception of pursuing virtue for its own sake and urging the need for the doctrine of rewards and punishments as a motive.⁸⁴

The commercial conception of the religious relationship may be seen as closely related to our earlier problem—the failure to appreciate the unicity of God and the uniqueness of religion. Where this appreciation is lacking, where man's relation to God is seen as essentially analogous to ordinary human relations, then religion may easily be seen as a sort of mutually profitable agreement binding man and God. Nowhere is this debasement more readily apparent than in the passage in which Cicero introduces his definition of religion as "justice towards the gods." "Furthermore," he contends, "how can you owe piety to a person who has bestowed nothing upon you? or how can you owe anything at all to one who has done you no service? Piety is justice towards the gods; but how can any claims of justice exist between us and

⁸³ See, respectively, *Sermons*, I, 13; VI, 192; and VI, 311. Cf. "The Folly of Hazarding Eternal Life for Temporal Enjoyments," XII, 202–220, and see also IV, 345–346, and X, 121–122.

⁸⁴ See *Alciphron*, in *Works*, III, 120–140; "The Third Dialogue," secs. 6–16. See also Cassirer, *Platonic Renaissance*, p. 191 and n. Berkeley's attack is directed principally at Shaftesbury, but the explicit discussion revolves mostly around the Stoics. In this connection, it might be mentioned that in the latter decades of the seventeenth century and the earlier part of the eighteenth, English thought was permeated by a strong current of anti-Stoicism. This was mostly directed against the Stoic denial of the passions (see Crane, *ELH* 1 [1934], 214–220), but the Stoic idea of the self-sufficiency of virtue and its being its own reward were also often attacked.

them, if god and man have nothing in common? Holiness is the science of divine worship; but I fail to see why the gods should be worshipped if we neither have received nor hope to receive benefit from them.”⁸⁵ Cicero’s statement presents this position in unusually crude terms. But its substance—though not quite so crassly expressed—may be found in many an eighteenth-century sermon. Once the qualitative distinction of God and man was overlooked, religion could become not so much a surrender as an investment. Coleridge described the decline in a single sentence: “Since the Revolution in 1688 our Church has been chilled and starved too generally by Preachers and Reasoners Stoic and Epicurean—first, a sort of pagan Morality, Virtue substituted for the Righteousness by faith, and lastly, Prudence, Paleyianism, substituted for Morality.”⁸⁶ The adventure of the religious life had become a venture.

Such a religious utilitarianism is, of course, diametrically opposed to the position championed by More and his fellow Cambridge Platonists—or, for that matter, by any Platonists. Certainly, they would be the last to assert that religion was principally concerned with the satisfaction of man’s purely temporal needs. Nor would they have attached such crucial importance to rewards as a motive for religious life. Professor Shorey has stated that “the main thesis of the *Republic* is that virtue is its own reward and needs no external sanction in this world or the next,”⁸⁷ and this thesis was vigorously advanced by the Cambridge Platonists. Shaftesbury’s *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*⁸⁸ (later attacked on this score by Newman, incidentally) is no doubt their best-known exposition of this view, but it is by no means their only one. Whichcote is full of the theme, and so is More. “To love God because He loves me,” he declares in an aphorism, “is but Self-love: To love God the more, because he loves us, and not others, is Envy in it self. To Love God because he is, simply Good, and simply and unconfinedly to imitate his Goodness, makes a Man

⁸⁵ *De Natura Deorum*, I.xli.

⁸⁶ *Seventeenth Century*, p. 180.

⁸⁷ Paul Shorey, *Platonism*, p. 65.

⁸⁸ See especially, in *Characteristics*, I, 268–274. Newman’s criticism was presented in the final discourse, “Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Religious Duty,” in *The Idea of a University*, ed. D. M. O’Connell (Chicago, 1927), especially pp. 201–202, 214–229.

truly Religious.”⁸⁹ And in a series of letters, More goes to great lengths to dispute the contention that all service of God must be performed “ex intuitu mercedis.” A pure disinterested virtue, he asserts, is not only desirable but attainable, being in fact the only truly deiform virtue, whereas “that Love, be it of what it will, that is founded on Self-love, is but Natural or Animal Love, not Divine.”⁹⁰ And it is, of course, to “Divine” love that More aspires.

More and his colleagues rejected outright, then, any form of religious utilitarianism, any suggestion that the ultimate purpose of religion is to advance the interests of man, in this world or the next. And yet one senses that through their constant exhortations to practical moral behavior, their incessant immediate concern with social action aimed at promoting man’s purely temporal good, their occasional deprecations of the more strictly theocentric aspects of religion, such as dogma or formal worship—one senses that through all these the Platonists perhaps unwittingly aided in shifting the center of religious interest from God to man, thus moving from religion towards morality and helping to foster the ensuing distortion of their own radically and totally different position. Indeed, it would appear that they themselves were not wholly unaware of the distortion; “did you hear,” Worthington asks More—

But did you hear none speak of what they had received at Cambridge, that God in the business of religion, doth not seek himself, but respects the good and happiness of his Creature? And how apt some are to misapply this, not only to the gratifications of their appetite (as if there were no such offense therein) but to make little of idolatry, God being not so studious of our doing such and such honour to him, not seeking nor mattering much our veneration?⁹¹

The attitude here described represents, to be sure, an utter distortion of the Cambridge Platonists’ position. But we should recog-

⁸⁹ *A Collection of Aphorisms: In Two Parts* (London, 1704), no. 15.

⁹⁰ “Select Letters,” in Ward, *Life*, p. 268. The letters in this series, pp. 251–288, were written by More in the course of a correspondence conducted with an anonymous minister, and they are undated. Throughout the letters, More of course touches upon the broader question—much discussed in the seventeenth century by Hobbes and his opponents, in the eighteenth century by Shaftesbury and Mandeville, and by innumerable moralists before and since—of whether any truly disinterested love is possible.

⁹¹ Worthington, *Diary and Correspondence*, III, 293; June 25, 1668.

nize—as Worthington clearly recognized—that it was nevertheless in large measure an outgrowth—and by no means a wholly surprising outgrowth—of their own views. Consider, for instance, a passage from More’s *Mystery of Godliness*, one in which he asserts of

the whole Business of Religion, That it is rather *Hominis gratiâ quam Dei*; and that though God’s Honour be mainly pretended in it, yet it be Man’s Happiness that is really intended by it, even of God himself. Which wretched Men of ignorant and dark Minds, and deeply leavened with the Pharisaical Leaven, understanding not, create much Trouble to themselves and all the World besides, in their peevish and inept Prosecution of matters of Religion.⁹²

Superficially, at least, More’s “*Hominis gratiâ*” and “the good and happiness of his Creature” which Worthington heard spoken of in Cambridge, would appear to be similar. Either phrase suggests a predominant concern with the satisfaction of purely human needs, and thus implies a change from God to man as the central axis around which religion revolves; either phrase heralds the change from a God-centered to a man-centered humanism which Basil Willey⁹³ has seen as taking place around the turn of the eighteenth century. And I think there can be little doubt that the Platonists’ constant specific emphasis upon moral action promoting human welfare was an important factor contributing to this shift.⁹⁴ The resemblance is, once again, only superficial. For, at

⁹² *Myst. G.*, VIII.xiii.3.

⁹³ *Christianity, Past and Present*, p. 77.

⁹⁴ The importance of the pragmatic element in the Platonists and even of its possible relevance to the subsequent course of utilitarianism has not gone unnoticed. J. A. Stewart (*Encyc. of Religion and Ethics*, III, 173) goes so far as to see Cambridge Platonism as assisting at “the birth of Utilitarianism.” (But it should be noted that he refers specifically to Shaftesbury and Cumberland.) With specific reference to More, Miss Nicolson (*Con. L.*, p. 126) speaks approvingly of his “exalted hedonism.” De Pauley (*Candle of the Lord*, p. 134) states that “it must be confessed” that, in the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, More painted “the ideal life in hedonist hues.” And in a more critical vein, Laird (*Hobbes*, p. 274) declares that More had no business attacking “theological Hobbianism” as “a sweetly superior suspicion of selfishness pervaded his theory [i.e., of ethics].” I would question, however, the attribution of hedonistic tendencies to More himself. I think that his own sincere belief in a disinterested virtue, pursued solely with reference to God, cannot be doubted. In the interests of candor, however, I must confess that, with respect to rewards and punishments, I do not know what to make of a very uncharacteristic passage from More’s *Immortality of the Soul*. In

bottom, the differences between the attitudes of the Cambridge Platonists and their successors are not only significant but crucial. To More and his colleagues the satisfaction of specifically human interests was in itself a religious act performed out of a religious motive—because it was “intended of God.” And above all, it was performed with an eye towards some final higher goal. The concern with human needs was only immediate; the promotion of “*Hominis gratiâ*” was only a means to the ultimate advancement of the greater glory of God. In many of their successors, however, men whose being was not so profoundly rooted in personal religious experience, both the original religious motive and the final religious *telos* were overlooked. Only the act upon which the Platonists had insisted remained, and its fulfillment became a purely pragmatic venture. The satisfaction of human needs—social or personal—was seen as being not only the immediate aim but the ultimate goal of religion; and, its center thus shifted from God to man, religion soon became reduced to moralism—indeed, at times, to commercialism.

IV

The religious decline is reflected in yet another aspect—the conception of the general activity by which religion is characterized. Taking the term in its broadest sense, it would seem clear that this activity takes place within, that the essential character of religion is theoretical rather than practical.⁹⁵ The characteristic

arguing for immortality, More declares that rewards are necessary as an incentive to virtue, and he criticizes “that high pretension of Stoicism, That Vertue to it self is a sufficient reward . . . And for my own part, I think in the main, that Epicurus, who placed the chiefest good in Pleasure, philosophiz’d more solidly than the paradoxical Stoicks” (II.xviii.6). Of course, as noted, in connection with More, by W. S. Sheriff in his *Religion and Ethics* (Philadelphia, 1933), pp. 64–65, much depends on the kind of reward expected, but the passage is nonetheless startling. More also often speaks of the “usefulness” of religion, but never in the sense that it is a means towards some further end, but rather in the sense that it enables man to reach his highest fulfillment.

⁹⁵ The theoretic character of religion has sometimes been seen as distinguishing it from morality. Arnold, who almost identified religion with morality, saw both as being essentially practical and the antithesis of theory (see *Liturature and Dogma*, p. 18). Bradley held the spheres of morality and practice to be coextensive, and therefore placed the crux of the problem

activities of love, contemplation, vision—all that is readily perceived as most relevant and most vital to the religious life—are basically forms of inner worship. However we define it and wherever we place our emphasis, it should be clear that religion involves, in essence, an apprehension of God, and a desire to assimilate to Him and be assimilated unto Him. The process of assimilation may—nay, must—no doubt impose certain practical demands; for surely religion has its pragmatic side as well as its theoretical. This includes, first, ethical conduct in its transmuted religious character, and secondly, the specific *praxis* which religion enjoins as peculiar to itself, in the form of discipline or worship. But whatever practical demands are thus enjoined can only be religious, not religion. If we ask in what activity does religion consist, we should hardly reply that it consists of comforting the poor and healing the sick or genuflection and libation. We should rather say that its activity is fundamentally one of contemplative vision. And, with an eye towards Schleiermacher's "Ihr [i.e., religion's] Wesen ist weder Denken noch Handeln, sondern Anschauung und Gefühl,"⁹⁶ we might turn the flank of the objection against intellectualism by momentarily including the emotional aspect of religion together with the intellectual, and placing both—as common forms of inner worship—over against practical conduct. Once the problem is clearly presented, Bergson's position that religion, in its highest forms, is essentially a *praxis*,⁹⁷ collapses almost of itself. For it is from the abstract apprehension of God that religion begins, and, with a growth in

of the coincidence or distinction of morality and religion in the question: "Is religion altogether practical? Is, that is to say, the theoretical element of it coordinate with or subordinate to the practical element?" (*Ethical Studies*, pp. 335–336)? De Burgh went even further, and presented the theoretical aspect of religion as being not only coordinate with the practical, but superior and anterior to it—"while the essence of morality lies in *praxis*, that of religion lies in *theoria*" (*From Morality to Religion*, p. 30). Of course, many moralists would object that morality, too, is not principally practical; but this is not our present concern.

⁹⁶ *Reden über die Religion*, in *Werke*, ed. O. Braun and J. Bauer (Leipzig, 1911), IV, 240.

⁹⁷ See the chapter, "La Religion Dynamique," in Henri Bergson, *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, 14^e ed. (Paris, 1933), pp. 223–285.

grace and growth in knowledge—through a process which must, admittedly, partake of various practical forms—it is with an ever profounder apprehension that it must continue. And its character remains theoretic rather than practical.

On this view, then, religion is seen as consisting principally and essentially in theoretic—taking the word in its broadest sense—rather than practical activity. Turning now to More, we may say that, at his best, he is fully aware of the need for distinguishing, on the primary level, between practical conduct and the essence of religion proper. Specifically, he sees action, particularly moral action, as resulting *from* the inner state of deformity—a state whose attainment and realization involves much that extends far beyond the narrow confines of practical ethics. More's recognition of the ultimate derivative character of moral conduct we have already observed in considering his first aspect, but we might here adduce one additional passage. It occurs at the start of the "Defence of the Moral Cabbala," and it reflects both More's awareness of the dangers of overemphasizing practical moral conduct, and his defense against those who would accuse him of doing just that. "We are now come," he begins

to the Moral Cabbala, which I do not call Moral in that low sense the generality of men understand Morality. For the process and growth, as likewise the failing and decay of the divine Life, is very intelligibly set forth in this present Cabbala. But I call it Moral, in counter-distinction to Philosophical or Physical; as Philo also uses this term Moral in divine matters. As when he speaks of God's breathing into Adam the breath of Life. . . , physically and Morally: Physically, by placing there the Senses, viz. in the Head; Morally, by inspiring his Intellect with divine knowledge, which is the highest Faculty of the Soul, as the Head is the chiefest part of the Body. Wherefore by Morality, I understand here divine Morality, such as is ingendred in the Soul by the operation of the holy Spirit, that inward living Principle of all godliness and honesty.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ "Defence," i. Cf. Whichcote, *Works*, II, 60, who declares that the opponents of morality must have in mind not true morality, but "some external ornament; that which we call civility; such a thing as doth not die, and colour a man's soul; such a thing as doth not establish a frame, and temper, a constitution of mind; such a thing as doth not make a man deform, or restore a man to the image of God, and make him really God-like. But now these principles of morality are those that do, and nothing else can do it." See also Stewart, *Encyc. of Religion and Ethics*, III, 168.

Clearly, "morality" here extends far beyond the bounds of behavior. Not that conduct is neglected; "the divine Life" of the *Conjectura Cabbalistica* certainly has its practical manifestations. But these are not of its essence; this consists in attaining an inner state of deiformity, which in turn includes an intellect inspired "with divine knowledge" and a soul suffused with "the holy Spirit, that inward living Principle of all godliness and honesty."

At bottom, then, More recognized the derivative character of conduct, its being, ultimately and ideally, an effect of the deiform and Dei-informed soul; and, at his best, he makes this perfectly clear. In actual practice, however, when recommending a specific course of activity, it is upon *praxis* rather than *theoria* that More places his emphasis. Thus, in reply to a request from Lady Conway for a program which will aid in the soul's restoration from her mundane fall, More prescribes a course which is, in itself, admirable. It consists of

1. Faith in the Power of God for the Extirpating of all Sin, and the Consummation of Righteousness in our Souls . . .

2. Earnest Prayer to God for the communicating Light to our Minds, whereby we may discover what is Evil; and for Strength to resist it and overcome it . . .

3. A wary and watchful Walking in all external Righteousness, such as is performed by the outward Man; and is in our Power to perform; that we may be thereby assured, that our Devotions are sincere.⁹⁹

Here morality would appear to be placed in proper perspective, being seen as a concomitant effect of a soul filled with faith and a mind suffused with divine light. Even so, one notes the absence of any mention of the need for contemplation as a human activity; and indeed a page later we encounter a brief deprecation of book-learning—"This, I am sure, is the true way to Life and Glory; and I know no other but this. It is not Reading of many Books, nor Joining with Sects . . . but it is the constant and resolved Practice of those few Precepts that I have set down." Of our greater immediate interest, however, is More's concluding advice—"but above all Things, relieve those that are in Want."¹⁰⁰ We note that even as More recognizes the ancillary character of moral conduct,

⁹⁹ Ca. February 1652, "Select Letters," in Ward, *Life*, p. 306.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

he nevertheless, in specifying an activity to be pursued, places it "above all things." And eventually, only the superficial fruits came to be seized upon, and their roots neglected. Conduct came to be looked upon as not only a form, but the content, of religion. The intellectual—and, in due time, the emotional—response out of which action must spring, began to be overlooked. The need for *praxis* was made paramount, and the *theoria* upon which all truly significant action must be based was relegated to, at best, a secondary role.

One catches a note of this emphasis upon practical results to the neglect of their sources in the *Divine Dialogues*. In the preceding chapter we have had occasion to glance at a number of passages conveying the very definite impression that the be-all and end-all of religion was practical conduct—passages of which it might be said that if (like the original readers of the pseudonymously published *Dialogues*) we did not know their author, we would indeed assume them to be asserting this position. We do know their author, however; and we realize that even when More is minimizing the importance of intellectual endeavor as compared with conduct, he does not conceive of the latter as a self-sufficient entity but as an outgrowth of a deeply rooted religious nature. For we must not lose sight of More's lifelong concern with inwardness. Practical action represents "external Righteousness," and as such, for More, can never be self-contained, but rather the result and the reflection of the inner religious experience.

And in More, the person, so it is indeed. This experience is essentially subjective, however; and in More, the author, one often does lose sight of it or perhaps catches only a hasty glimpse. What one sees prominently is the practical advice offered, advice which repeatedly suggests that the characteristic—almost the sole—activity of religion consists in *praxis* rather than *theoria*; and which, in so doing, attributes to religion the activity more properly indigenous to morality, thus depriving it of its own. The depth and the richness of his own personal experience More could not transmit; but his final "but above all Things"—the concrete advice calling for proper conduct—is one which could be heard by all. And it is one which we begin to hear with recurring frequency. The

subordination of knowledge to practice that we noted in our treatment of More's second aspect is characteristic of post-Restoration theology.¹⁰¹ The purpose of religion, says Fowler, is "to make men good: not to intoxicate their brains with notions, or furnish their heads with a systeme of opinions; but to reform men's lives, and purifie their natures." Locke describes "the business of true religion" as "the regulating of men's lives according to the rules of justice and piety." Perhaps most explicit is Tillotson. In one sermon he speaks of "that wherein religion mainly consists, viz. the practice of real goodness"; and in another he declares that "two things make up religion, the knowledge and the practice of it; and the first is wholly in order to the second; and God hath not revealed to us the knowledge of himself and his will, merely for the improvement of our understanding, but for the bettering of our hearts and lives; not to entertain our minds with the speculations of religion and virtue, but to form and govern our actions." In the early eighteenth century, we hear Clarke defending the "articles" of revealed religion with the statement that "every one of these Doctrines has a natural Tendency, and a direct and powerful Influence to reform Men's Lives, and correct their Manners. This is the Great end and ultimate Design of all true Religion; and 'tis a very great and fatal Mistake, to think that any Doctrine or any Belief whatsoever, can be any otherwise of any Benefit to Men, than as it is fitted to promote this main End." Clarke then cites Archbishop Sharp to the same effect, but for a final example we might look to Bishop Butler, speaking somewhat later in the century. "Men of deep research and curious inquiry," he cautions, "should just be put in mind, not to mistake what they are doing. If their discoveries serve the cause of virtue and religion, in the way of proof, motive to practice, or assistance in it; or if they tend to render life less unhappy, and promote its satisfactions; then they are most usefully employed: but bringing things to light, alone and of itself, is of no manner of use, any otherwise than as entertainment or diversion."¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ See H. R. McAdoo, *The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology* (London, 1949), chs. i and ii.

¹⁰² See, respectively, Fowler, *Principles and Practices*, p. 18; Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, in *Works*, VI, 5-6; Tillotson, *Sermons*, XI, 4, and VII, 49, respectively; Clarke, *Discourse of Natural Religion*, p. 211; Butler, *Fifteen Sermons*, in *Works*, II, 270-271.

The emphasis upon practical rather than theoretic activity was bolstered by the assumption that whatever limited knowledge was necessary, could be easily attained. It was asserted that man—individually and collectively—was already in possession of sufficient knowledge; the important thing now was not so much to develop it as to apply it—and apply it, of course, in conduct. Willey has seen this view as typical of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century natural religion: “To the question, What must I do to be saved?, therefore, natural religion made answer: ‘We want not so much knowledge to tell us what to do, as Wills to do that which we may know!’ You know perfectly well what to do: your own nature informs you. Follow Reason, the God within; look after your conduct and your creed will take care of itself.”¹⁰³ The attitude is sufficiently common among exponents of revealed religion as well, however. We may observe it in the Cambridge Platonists themselves, for whom it could obviously have special meaning. For with their emphasis upon inwardness and introspection—Smith’s “intra te quaere Deum”¹⁰⁴ or More’s “the Quakers Principle is the most Safe and Seasonable here, to keep close to the Light within a Man”¹⁰⁵—they could indeed look to the God within. And of course, the theory of “innate ideas” stood them in good stead. The necessary knowledge, it was presumed, was easily available; the business at hand now demanded the cultivation of the will and its practical application. “Our Wills,” said Whichcote, “are more to be blamed, than our Natures. Perverse Wills do more harm in the World, than Weak Heads.” “We want not,” declares Smith, “so much means of knowing what we ought to do, as wills to do that which we may know.”¹⁰⁶ “The world knows enough already,” More writes Lady Conway, “unlesse their maners were better,”¹⁰⁷ and it is consequently to the cultivation of manners

¹⁰³ *Eighteenth Century Background*, p. 8. ¹⁰⁴ *Select Discourses*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ January 28, 1675/6; “Select Letters,” in Ward, *Life*, p. 247.

¹⁰⁶ Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, no. 405; Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ April 5, 1662, *Con. L.*, p. 200. It should be emphasized, however, that the term “manners” had far greater significance in the seventeenth century than it has today. To us, “manners” is virtually equivalent with etiquette, but in More’s day, the word referred to conduct in all phases of life. Thus, the *N.E.D.* cites from Milton’s *Areopagitica*—“that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or maners no law can possibly permit,” and from Tillotson’s *Rule of Faith* in which he speaks of Scripture as “the rule of faith and manners.”

that More and his successors would have the principal efforts of mankind dedicated. It was indeed to the development of manners that the religious community turned, and with results that were not altogether happy. With the ensuing concentration upon external conduct, the inner religious core came increasingly to be neglected or forgotten; and, with its dehydration, the vitality of English religious life was seriously sapped.

In the process of the cultivation of manners, the religious element was further weakened by the particular character of the conduct that was so strongly encouraged. Overwhelmingly, it is social action which is extolled. Benefaction, friendship, mutual forbearance and assistance, munificence to the needy, loyalty to party and country, self-sacrificing public service—these are presented as the supreme virtues. The generally public, and especially urban, character of the age, the rise of benevolism, and the tendency towards conformity—all either effect or reflect the overriding social emphasis. And it is one in which Augustan theologians shared fully. Speaking of the Latitudinarian clergy—especially, of those of its members who were educated in Cambridge—R. S. Crane has correctly pointed out that they were “great preachers of the social virtues. And few things, indeed, were more characteristic of these Latitudinarian divines than the assiduity with which they exhorted their hearers and readers to benevolent feelings and acts as the best means at once of actualizing the beneficent designs of God for man and of realizing the aim of religion to perfect human nature.”¹⁰⁸ Modern charity—and the act more often than the sentiment—rather than medieval *caritas*, is their theme.

The overwhelming social emphasis contributed—being both cause and symptom—to the post-Restoration religious decline. For while charity, and the whole troop of social virtues are, in their place, no doubt excellent, they can afford no substitute for religion.

¹⁰⁸ *ELH* 1 (1934), 211. With reference to the area of philanthropy, W. K. Jordan has seen the shift from religious values to secular social morality—from endowing a church to aiding the poor—as taking place throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (*Philanthropy in England, 1480–1660* [London, 1959], pp. 147–149). But I think that the social emphasis did not become truly dominant until after the Restoration; and, of course, within a religious context, social philanthropy itself becomes an aspect of religion.

Furthermore, the excessive and exclusive concern with them may vitiate the religious consciousness. For, at bottom, religion represents a relation of the individual soul towards its Maker. Any social aspect—even a communion of the saints—must, though important, remain secondary. As comprehensive definitions of religion, Whitehead's "religion is solitariness" or "religion is what the individual does with his solitariness," are perhaps inadequate. But surely no one could quarrel with his statement that "if you are never solitary, you are never religious."¹⁰⁹ Augustine in the garden, Plotinus' "flight of the alone to the Alone," Juan de la Cruz's waiting "en parte donde nadie parecía"—here, one feels, lies the core of the religious experience, *solus cum solo*. The inordinate stress upon social, communal, and political relations not only weakens religion, but diverts and distorts it. For such an emphasis affects both the means and the ends of the religious life. It not only renders the exercise of religion difficult, but also suggests false motives for its pursuit and false goals as its terminus. It posits human comfort and convenience as significant aims; it gives temporal benefits an ultimate importance; the worship of God, it replaces with the service of society.¹¹⁰ And if we may mention Whitehead again, one recalls that he attributed "the modern fading of interest in religion" principally to this very confusion of social and religious elements, to the fact that

religion has been presented as valuable for the ordering of life. Its claims have been rested upon its function as a sanction to right conduct. Also the purpose of right conduct quickly degenerates into the formation of pleasing social relations. We have here a subtle degradation of religious ideas, following upon their gradual purification under the influence of keen ethical intuitions. Conduct is a by-product of religion—an inevitable by-product, but not the main point . . . Above and beyond all things, the religious life is not a research after comfort.¹¹¹

In emphasizing social conduct, we move, in short, from the proper ends of religion towards the logical goals of a secular

¹⁰⁹ *Religion in the Making* (New York, 1927), pp. 17, 47, and 17, respectively.

¹¹⁰ The logical extremity of such an attitude is something like Comte's "Religion of Humanity"; but it is rarely pushed this far.

¹¹¹ *Science and the Modern World*, pp. 274-275.

morality—from the worship of God to the service of man, and from the realm of inner vision to the world of outer action.¹¹² Which is not to say that, in the religious life, conduct can or should be neglected. On the contrary, it must be insisted upon rigorously. For mortal men are placed within a practical framework, and any religious system which, trusting to “spirituality,” fails to take account of the human situation, must ultimately resolve itself into nothingness. The religious existence must be dominated by an all-embracing discipline in which the minutest acts of consciousness assume a religious aspect, and, in their transmuted religious character, take their place within the comprehensive framework of a life wholly dedicated to the service of God. Conduct is vital, both as an expression of character and as a means to its formation. Inextricably interwoven with the essence of religious faith, it is at once cause and effect, an indispensable element in that constant interplay of the inner and the outer man, of faith and works, through which the religious personality rises to ever greater heights. But the concern with conduct may lead to abuse, and it

¹¹² Of course, many moralists—Platonists certainly—would insist that even morality has its nonsocial aspects, that, as More put it, “Political Society . . . by no means is the adequate Measure of sound Morality, but there is a Moral Perfection of humane Nature, antecedent to all Society” (*Norris-More Corr.*, p. 147; April 13, 1685); see, e.g., Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 415–416 and 431 n.; Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 153; and Taylor, *Problem of Conduct*, p. 468. And numerous others would object that, social or personal, morality, too, is not a “research after comfort.” But while both objections are to be warmly seconded, it should be remembered that they can apply only to a religious morality, one which places the pursuit of virtue within the framework of the service of God. A purely secular morality, in which man is perforce the “measure of all things,” does become, as Plato so keenly realized, a merely social affair; and, if consistently carried out, it does become—as in the more thoroughgoing and the more honest Utilitarians—a “research after comfort.” A secular moral idealism has nothing on which to stand, for without a belief in God, one can logically posit no absolute ideals. As Kant perceived, even when the secular idealist has perfected his moral will, he has no direction in which to exert it (see *Religion*, pp. 4–7). He can have no desiderata but comfort and convenience, and these can, at best, be worked up into moral ideals only if pursued altruistically, in the service of humanity as a whole. And to turn, finally, from Plato and Kant to the testimony of popular usage, it is, after all, a fact that, with the growing secularization of modern life, the general conception of morality has been limited to social virtues. “By morality,” writes a Gifford lecturer, “I mean what is meant in common speech, namely, the behaviour of men in society” (H. H. Henson, *Christian Morality* [Oxford, 1936], p. 29).

is precisely this that confronts the student of Augustan religious life. Specifically, three dangers might be mentioned. Foremost is the possibility that conduct may be taken as an end—nay, with Tillotson, as *the* end—of religion rather than as a means; that its relation, consequently, to the *true* ends of the religious life—to contemplative vision, to knowledge of God, to love and devotion—will be overlooked or forgotten; that only the external shell will remain while inner vital power shall have been dissipated. And the danger is even greater with respect to socially useful conduct. Sociologists are fond of describing the historical deterioration of religious elements, the manner in which myth and ritual gradually harden into the crust of an institutionalized religion, and lose their motive force. But they often forget that the same danger applies to the social conduct enjoined by religion; only in greater measure. For, especially in highly developed societies, the hollowness of purely formal worship will soon be exposed. But the point is not so clearly evident with regard to conduct which confers humanitarian benefit.

Secondly—and here we return to our main theme—there is a danger that the role of conduct will be distorted by the omission or diminution of some other element of the religious life. The proper perspective can be maintained only so long as all facets are kept in view. In particular, it is of course the intellectual element that I have in mind. Conduct can only take its right place, can only perform even its own function, when it is balanced—and influenced—by the intellectual aspect of religion. A “purely moral” approach cannot long be maintained, especially as regards a whole society. Cut off from the roots of knowledge and the search for it, conduct gradually loses its vitality and its content. A growth in righteousness must be accompanied—nay, must be intermeshed with—a growth in knowledge. For the quest for virtue must involve the whole man, the intellect included. Disregard this, and the result is disproportion; and disproportion, as the Greeks knew, brings first chaos and then desiccation.

Thirdly, we must beware of another distortion, one which relates particularly to moral conduct, and which, once again, may result from the emphasis upon *praxis*, combined with the concurrent failure to take sufficient account of other elements. The

isolation of morality as a self-contained unit may occur not only in our experience but in our thinking; it may affect not only our conduct, but our conception of morality proper. In our concern with practical effects, we may forget the religious principles upon which, from More's point of view as from mine, true morality must be based—"la morale," as Loisy said, "étant comme impliquée dans la religion, qui en inspirait et sanctionnait les préceptes."¹¹³ Not only may we take conduct to be itself the proper end of religion, not only may we, in our own subjective practice, divorce conduct from religious intellection, but we may take the further step of divorcing the objective *idea* of morality and moral conduct from religion. Ethical conduct may be torn loose from its moorings in religious faith; secular morality may be granted an independent existence, cut off from its divine roots. And so we may find that we have run the gamut—from the proper recognition of the distinction and yet the interrelation of morality and religion, through their confusion, to the dissociation of the two and the virtual discard of the religious element. The danger has indeed been mentioned by F. D. Maurice, in connection with our own Cambridge Platonists. Speaking of Smith, he writes that "there was in him—far more markedly in his contemporaries Whichcote and Worthington—such a dread of the substitution of theological dogmas for moral principles, as evidently predicted the very separation between theology and morals which they most desired to avert. In this point of view, the history of the Cambridge Latitudinarian School is full of instruction."¹¹⁴ In their solicitude to inculcate a religion in which, as Whichcote said, "what is spiritual" and "what is moral" should coincide, the Platonists may have helped to foster a moral system in which the spiritual was virtually omitted.

For the subsequent debasement of religion, the Platonists cannot, of course, be held responsible. That their successors—in many cases, their own students—perverted their position, is surely not their fault. Nor can they be blamed for having failed to transmit their own deeply personal experience. But we may conclude this

¹¹³ Alfred Loisy, *La Crise Morale du Temps Present et l'Éducation Humaine* (Paris, 1937), p. 7.

¹¹⁴ *Modern Philosophy*, p. 349.

chapter as we began, by pointing out that even as we refrain from passing judgment, we must nevertheless persist in seeking to establish the facts. And if these point—as I think they do—to a close relation between the refulgent glory of the Platonists and the diminished lustre of their successors, if they indicate that the Cambridge men contributed, albeit unwittingly and unwillingly, to the subsequent decline of English religious life—then we must not shy away from them, but rather assimilate them and attempt to learn from them. Even if we assume that the history of Cambridge Platonism offers no occasion for censure, we must nevertheless recognize with Maurice that it is “full of instruction.”

Summary and Conclusion

THIS study began with the conviction that Henry More—together with his fellow Cambridge Platonists—is both intrinsically and historically significant. In the course of this essay, we have sought to examine both his own thought and his place in English religious history, with particular reference to the crucial problem of the role of intellection in religion. With regard to this problem, we noted a certain ambivalence in More. On the one hand, he recognizes the importance of reason and the need for its exercise in man's religious life. The essence of that life—at once its point of departure and its terminus—is deiformity, the fact and the ideal. In striving to achieve the *imago Dei*, man imitates the great Archetype of both wisdom and goodness. In the quest for deiformity, consequently, both the intellectual and the volitional elements in man must participate. And, very much in the Platonic tradition, More sees these two facets as not merely coordinate nor even mutually supplementary, but rather as mutually complementary—as being, indeed, fused. The intellect and the will irradiate each other, and their interpenetration results in the integration of the psyche in the dedicated service of God and the quest for Him.

This is one aspect of More's "rational theology," that which was principally discussed in Chapter Two. However, he also displays another—and very different—attitude, one which is marked, to a certain extent, by a suspicion of the *libido sciendi*, but which is, above all, characterized by the assumption that, as regards the religious life, the exercise of intellectual faculties and the exertion of intellectual effort are, on the whole, unnecessary. From this aspect—to the analysis of which Chapter Three was chiefly devoted—the emphasis is rather placed upon the presumed simplicity of religion. Here More tends to assert that relatively little

need be known in order to achieve salvation, and that what minimum knowledge is necessary may be easily attained; hence, man's spiritual existence entails little rational endeavor. Particularly evident in this connection is a "democratic" concern for the universal accessibility of religious truths that should yet be individually verifiable, a concern which almost inevitably resulted in a decline of the intellectual element in religion. It would not even be amiss to speak of an anti-intellectual strain in More's writings.

Students of More are thus confronted with a fundamental ambivalence in his thought. It is an ambivalence which may be partially explained away, but which must nevertheless ultimately be recognized as indigenous, deeply rooted in More's nature. We may justifiably assume that the ideal of a unified intellect and will represents More's central position, but the tendency to bifurcate them must be regarded as equally basic in his thinking. Both aspects of his theology reflect deeply ingrained attitudes, each developing from a fundamental strain running through the very fabric of More's being. In part, the fissure in More's central position is only imaginary, the result of his forensic activity. Continually driven on by the exigencies of polemics, More often found himself forced to emphasize one side of his outlook while the other temporarily lapsed from view, to be recalled in another section where perhaps its partner might momentarily recede from sight. Thus, from intermeshing roots, we sometimes get, on the surface, two distinct trees—nay, two radically different fruits—each not complementing but countervailing the other, and each representing a distortion of their mutual source. And in part, the dichotomy in More's thought may be ascribed to the course of his development. In the earlier works, the role of reason in religion looms rather larger; but in the later writings, the significance of intellection dwindled gradually as More himself came to minimize its importance. While no violent change occurs, one does encounter a shift in emphasis—at times subtle, at times plainly overt, but in any event, very definite. But again, the two aspects of More's theology do coexist. Elements of anti-intellectualism are already evident in the earlier works, and, even in his later years, More was capable of producing inspiring passages

envisioning the fusion of a purified intellect with an enlightened will in the dedicated service of God. The ambivalence in More's thought must ultimately be recognized as the result or reflection of an unresolved inner conflict.

When the concern with intellectual activity was minimized, it was generally replaced—especially in More's later works—by an increasingly exclusive emphasis upon moral conduct, particularly upon its public and social phases. Practical morality was given priority, rational endeavor was regarded as little more than a frosting upon the religious cake. It is this preoccupation with morality which constitutes More's closest bond with his successors, in whom the tendency to reduce religion to moralism often became pronounced. In the concluding chapter, consequently, we had occasion to consider the relations of morality and religion, with reference to both More and Restoration or eighteenth-century theology. With no intention of identifying their respective positions or of castigating More for later developments, care was taken to point out both his affinities with and his differences from subsequent religious thinkers. The crucial problem here concerned determining whether the fundamental, qualitative distinction between morality and religion was recognized at all. Some attention was also devoted, however, to a consideration of their respective means and ends, with an eye towards defining the extent to which morality and religion may have been confused, either by More or his successors. The discussion perhaps ranged somewhat afield, but I'm afraid its course was virtually inevitable. For any serious attempt at the study of intellectual history must employ both the philosophic and the historical methods. It must be ready to analyze a problem in its abstract form, as well as to trace its concrete historical development. And abstract analysis does not always permit confinement to the study of a "period."

II

The subtitle of this study derives from the fountainhead of Cambridge Platonist scholarship, John Tulloch's *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*. Its premises are decidedly different, however, and, in conclusion, it is perhaps best to set these forth candidly. In brief,

Tulloch's epithet appears to me to be a misnomer. A religion based upon the theology which he describes is one in which reason is not so much a participant as an umpire; it does not play the game, but rather sets up the rules and then referees. Neither the process of thought nor its product is assumed to be an integral and indispensable element. The emphasis falls rather upon conduct, particularly on its social aspects; in a word, upon morality. This emphasis is accompanied by especially lavish praise of toleration, praise which, more often than not, is based upon pragmatic rather than philosophic considerations. Dogma is generally disdained, suspiciously viewed as being both intellectually arbitrary and socially divisive. Religion is represented as being, on its speculative side, basically simple. The knowledge of a few essential truths is deemed sufficient, with a minimum of effort required for its attainment. There is, in short, little intimation that—apart from defining the basis and the limits of the religious realm—intellection and rational endeavor might constitute a facet of the religious life proper.

The "rational" element in this theology consists in its emphasizing not so much the responsibility of human reason as its supremacy. Its adherents are in general agreement that religion must conform to man's rational faculties. To the extent that some of them also insist that religion derive from human intellect, they are, on this view, deemed even more rational. Thus, in this sense, a natural theology which dispenses with suprahuman revelation entirely, becomes the epitome of rationalism. However, even those who refuse to go to such lengths—and Tulloch himself certainly did not go so far—must, at any rate, assert the authority of human reason. Preferably, they should assert the authority of individual reason, for another salient feature of this "rational theology" is its insistence upon the validity and adequacy of private judgment. Recourse or deference to external authority, be it even human, is regarded as a symptom of a blind faith, in contrast with which, reliance upon one's own reason is held up as representing a more enlightened approach. In a word, Tulloch's "rational theology" is a theology which is primarily concerned with the *power* of reason rather than with its duties.

On my own view, the term "rational theology" ought to mean

something else entirely. It should apply to a theology which recognizes the exercise of man's intellectual faculties as an integral and indispensable aspect of his religious life; which sees the attempt to understand God and His will as an essential phase of human activity; which looks upon study and intellectual endeavor as fundamental virtues; which, finally, incorporates the search for knowledge—whether as an end or as a means—as a facet of the religious realm proper. Such a theology would insist, above all, that neither emotion nor morality is enough, but that thought must enter into man's spiritual existence, and that thinking constitutes a genuine religious experience. In this sense, a theology is most thoroughly rational if it conceives man's ultimate goal in intellectual terms and sees beatification as containing an element of understanding. Falling short of this, it might still be considered rational if it underscored the importance of employing intellection as a means of attaining even affective religious goals. But the adjective would hardly apply to a theology which sees conduct as the be-all and end-all of religion, and which further maintains that what little religious knowledge is necessary, can be apprehended with little effort. Whether revelation is accepted or denied would, on this view, make not one whit of difference. For the acid test is the role of human reason in the processes of the religious life proper, rather than its function in formulating the premises of religion or defining its limits. A truly rational theology must be one which emphasizes the obligations of reason as well as its rights.

From this point of view, we shall clearly have a very different perspective from that offered us by Tulloch and his followers. It will appear, for instance, that Scholasticism¹ represents a much more truly rational theology than that which Tulloch has in mind—say, that of Chillingworth or Lord Herbert. However, there is obviously little point in becoming involved in a logomachy. Rightly or wrongly, Tulloch's sense is fairly well-established. Friend and foe accept it readily, and it is clearly employed in such famous works as Lecky's *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* or A. W. Benn's *History of English*

¹ That Scholasticism constitutes, in a sense, a highly rational system has often been pointed out, perhaps most notably by Whitehead in the opening chapter of his *Science and the Modern World*.

Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century. The eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines "rationalism" as "a term employed both in philosophy and in theology for any system which sets up human reason as the final criterion and chief source of knowledge";² while more recently, Professor Brinton tells us that "the rationalist tends to the position that the reasonable is the natural and that there is no supernatural."³ To avoid misunderstanding I have therefore, as a matter of fact, used the term "rational theology" sparingly, preferring to denote precisely the question under consideration rather than rely upon the ambiguous connotations of a controversial term. Whatever terms we employ, however, let there be no confusion regarding the concepts. Between the two types of "rational theology" there lies not merely a gap but a chasm.

This study has of course been concerned with "rational theology" in the latter sense. Above all, it has attempted to assess the importance attached to intellection by More, and to define the role he assigned to it within the religious life. Consequently, the intellectual aspect of religion has been emphasized throughout; it has served as the focus of the book and, explicitly or implicitly, the need for it has been insisted upon pervasively. In part, this emphasis springs from the fact that it is principally on this point—which holds the key to his total position—that More's view has been insufficiently understood. Primarily, however, it derives from the premises with which the book was written—the profound conviction that thought constitutes an integral phase of personal religious experience. Whether or not we regard intellectual activity as the most important element of the religious life—this is a question which I leave open at this juncture—its value can hardly be overestimated. As elements in man's total spiritual existence, emotion, thought, and action are equally indispensable;

² S.v. "Rationalism." The writer goes on to declare that rationalism "is practically synonymous with freethinking." In this connection, one can of course distinguish between the substantive term, "rationalism," referring to a comprehensive system, and the adjective "rational," which may modify a specific aspect of a theology. But the same tendency is generally evident in the prevailing use of both terms.

³ Crane Brinton, *Ideas and Men* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1950), p. 334. Cf. also J. M. Robertson, *Rationalism* (London, 1921), pp. 1-7, and André Brémond, *Rationalisme et Religion*, *Archives de Philosophie*, XI (1935), Cahier IV, pp. 1-5.

and, furthermore, they are closely related. In the religious life, intellection is not only a vital element in itself; it is also the necessary sustenent of all the rest. Certainly, in any area of human endeavor, practical conduct is of primary importance; Arnold's estimate of conduct as representing three-quarters of life is, as regards the mass of men, perhaps only an understatement. However, we must realize, as did Arnold himself, that it is only the fourth quarter of continual intellectual endeavor which can give direction and significance to action, that without thought, intelligent and disciplined conduct can sustain itself no better than a three-legged stool. Surely, formal worship and devotional experience are indispensable to religion. Nevertheless, we must recognize with Whitehead that "mere ritual and emotion cannot maintain themselves untouched by intellectuality."⁴ As Coleridge, with his extraordinary psychological insight, so keenly perceived, true faith can be neither profound nor enduring where the intellect—be it great or small—is not fully and actively engaged in the quest for God: "It is impossible that the affections should be kept constant to an object which gives no employment to the understanding. The energies of the intellect, increase of insight, and enlarging views, are necessary to keep alive the substantial faith in the heart. They are the appointed fuel to the sacred fire."⁵ Furthermore, if we think in terms of a religious community rather than of an individual, then the intellectual element becomes doubly important. It is only upon the pillars of thought that the structure of a common heritage can be reared, only out of the rich soil of philosophic endeavor that a tradition, at once deeply rooted and vigorously alive, can develop to maturity. The evanescent effects of transient emotion are, taken by themselves, too subjective, too fragile, and too nebulous, to bear transmission. But where it finds integration with an intellectual element, endowed with objective form and yet engaging the personal energies of every member of the religious society, then subjective emotion itself may attain permanent and collective significance; and while yet retaining its direct and personal character, may enter into the main stream of a historical tradition.

⁴ *Religion in the Making*, p. 23.

⁵ "A Lay Sermon," in *Works*, VI, 189.

However, this intellectual element must be vigorously active. If it is to revitalize the whole spiritual personality, then it cannot itself remain quiescent. If the intellect is, indeed, to supply "the appointed fuel to the sacred fire" of faith, then its own hearth must be kept burning. The intellectual phase of religion cannot consist in the dormant acceptance of a conceptual datum, but must rather actively and constantly engage the individual's rational faculties. It must demand, from each and every believer, the exertion of a maximum of intellectual effort. This is not to say that we all can or should continually judge the premises of faith in the light of a searching criticism. Quite the contrary. But let us remember that the intellect may not only pass judgment but elucidate; that it is an organ of understanding as well as of assessment; that its function may be appreciative development no less than judicial examination. The conception that the intellect is primarily a weapon of critical judgment is, after all, comparatively recent. Indeed, M. Paul Hazard,⁶ surely not the least perceptive student of European thought, dates its prevalence from the very period we have been studying, the second half of the seventeenth century. And the conception is certainly inadequate. In the language of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, there is, as opposed to critical inquiry, the duty and the task of sympathetic investigation. Or, in terms of Mill's famous distinction, for those who cannot or would not always be asking Bentham's question, "what is the use of it?" there remains Coleridge's—"what does it mean?" It is a question which surely requires no less fruitful and no less complex an answer. And it is the more comprehensive question, for those who ask it are not confined by the limits of their own conceptions. One recalls the wisdom of C. C. J. Webb's remark that "rationalism"—he refers to that which would reject the supernatural—"rationalism is not really so much an excess of confidence in reason as a want of confidence in it; since it does not attempt to understand a great part of human experience."⁷

Above all, we should neither assume nor advocate an imagined simplicity in religion. In a sense, of course, as Coleridge pointed

⁶ See his *La Crise de la Conscience Européenne (1680-1715)* (Paris, 1935), I, 121.

⁷ Clement C. J. Webb, *Studies in the History of Natural Theology* (Oxford, 1915), p. 358.

out, "all truth indeed is simple, and needs no extrinsic ornament. And the more profound the truth is, the more simple: for the whole labour and building up knowledge is but one continued process of simplification."⁸ But let us remember in just what sense. There is, to paraphrase Bergson, a simplicity below intellect and a simplicity above—or, better said, within—it; a simple unity resulting from exclusive denudation and from comprehensive integration; that of the amoeba and that of the universe. The "simplicity" of the equation Einstein so painfully sought in his last years is very different from the "plainness" Locke approvingly ascribed to religion—"these are articles that the labouring and illiterate man may comprehend. This is a religion suited to vulgar capacities; and the state of mankind in this world, destined to labour and travel . . . The greatest part of mankind have not leisure for learning and logic, and superfine distinctions of the schools. Where the hand is used to the plough and the spade, the head is seldom elevated to sublime notions, or exercised in mysterious reasoning."⁹ One can only rejoin that the head that is too busy to study God and His ways is busier than it should be; that even those of "vulgar capacities"—and who can exclude himself from the group—must "elevate" themselves to as sublime notions as they can grasp; and that when we have reached our limit, we must realize that, above and beyond, there remains a fuller and a clearer truth. Whether dealing with seventeenth-century or with contemporary religious problems, let us recognize with Whitehead that "so far as concerns religious problems, simple solutions are bogus solutions . . . For religion is concerned with our reactions of purpose and emotion due to our personal measure of intuition into the ultimate mystery of the universe. We must not postulate simplicity. The witness of history and of common sense tells us that systematic formulations are potent engines of emphasis, of purification, and of stability."¹⁰ Simple majesty is, in a sense, the terminus of the religious life. It is only attained, however, through arduous grappling with the related complexities of action, emotion, and thought.

⁸ *Works*, VI, 189.

⁹ *Reasonableness of Christianity*, in *Works*, VII, 157.

¹⁰ *Adventures of Ideas* (New York, 1933), p. 207.

Essay on Bibliography

Selected Bibliography

The Works of Henry More
Other Works

Index

Essay on Bibliography

In view of the wide range of More's interests, a bibliography of studies relevant to More could include almost any work concerned with any aspect of seventeenth-century cultural history. However, by its very length, such a list—ranging from Ranke and Gardiner to Butterfield and Thorndike—would defeat its own purpose. This essay therefore has been limited to a brief discussion of the more important studies which have a fairly direct bearing upon More and his thought. It is divided into three sections. The first discusses background studies of general seventeenth-century religious thought, the second treats works on Cambridge Platonism, and the third treats studies dealing with More himself. The last section is again subdivided into three subsections dealing with: a) biographical studies; b) studies of More's thought; c) general studies of a number of specific seventeenth-century problems in which More was particularly interested and in connection with which he is discussed.

I

Despite the contemporary resurgence of seventeenth-century studies, there is no single recent work which presents a reasonably thorough and yet comprehensive survey of English religious thought during the period. For such a survey—covering significant minor writers as well as the major figures—one must still turn to a number of older studies, notably to the first volume of John Hunt's *Religious Thought in England: From the Reformation to the End of the Last Century* (1870) and the early volumes of John Stoughton's *History of Religion in England (1640-1850)* (1881). However, modern scholarship has produced a plethora of more specialized studies which, taken together, cover the whole ground very ably. A good survey of the initial phases of seventeenth-century Anglican thought is to be found in a lengthy

article by James Thayer Addison, "Early Anglican Thought," *Hist. Mag. Prot. Episc. Church* 22 (1953), 248-369, while the latter part of the century is treated in G. R. Cragg's perceptive study, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason: A Study of Changes in Religious Thought within the Church of England* (1950). The predominantly Anglican strain of religious humanism is analyzed in Herschel C. Baker's *The Wars of Truth: Studies in the Decay of Christian Humanism in the Earlier Seventeenth Century* (1952), although the scope of this work extends beyond any single religious or theological party. The fullest single survey of the liberal wing of Anglicanism is probably still John Tulloch's two-volume *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century* (1872), a work which, of course, devotes considerable space to our more specific subject, the Cambridge Platonists. In this connection, one might also mention the major studies of Arminianism, for while Arminianism is of course not to be identified with Anglicanism (even after Hooker, many Anglicans remained Calvinists and some Puritans, witness John Goodwin, became Arminians), Arminian thought did tend to flourish more within the Anglican camp. The significant features of Arminian theology are clearly summarized in H. D. Foster's "Liberal Calvinism: The Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort in 1618," *Harvard Theol. Rev.* 16 (1923), 1-37, and in the first two chapters of A. W. Harrison's *Arminianism* (1937), while its progress in England is traced in Owen Chadwick's "Arminianism in England," *Religion in Life* 29 (1960), 448-455.

Of the extensive literature on the development of Puritan thought, Perry Miller's *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (1939), and A. S. P. Woodhouse's weighty introduction to *Puritanism and Liberty* (1950), are easily the most valuable. However, one might also single out M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* (1939); William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (1938); an excellent introductory chapter in William P. Holden's *Anti-Puritan Satire, 1572-1642* (1954); on the more radical elements, Joseph Frank, *The Levellers* (1955), and D. B. Robertson, *The Religious Foundations of Leveller Democracy* (1951); and, on the latter part of the century, Charles Edwin Whiting, *Studies*

in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660-1688 (1931).

Turning from factions to problems, the problem of faith and reason—under which may be subsumed the question of science and religion—is clearly the most important. The background of the problem may be seen in such works as Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass* (1936); Paul H. Kocher, *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (1953); and Herschel C. Baker, *The Dignity of Man* (1947). Within our period proper, faith and reason is discussed in most of the aforementioned studies of Anglican and Puritan thought as well as in numerous monographs dealing with specific writers. However, there are surprisingly few surveys of the development of the question in our period as a whole and no truly competent full-length survey. Among the better (and better-known) accounts are those of Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660* (1945), pp. 318-349; Basil Willey's competent *The Seventeenth Century Background* (1934), chs. i-iv, vii, viii; Louis I. Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (1934); Herschel C. Baker's previously cited *The Wars of Truth*; C. E. Raven's 1951 Gifford Lectures, *Natural Religion and Christian Theology* (1953), vol. I; Richard S. Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (1958), which, incidentally, contains a useful bibliographical essay; and, on the more rational side of Puritanism, "Covenant" theology, Perry Miller's definitive exposition, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," in *Pubs. Colonial Soc. of Mass.* 32 (1937), pp. 247-300. There are valuable references and quotations in Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters* (1949), pp. 1-40; S. L. Bethell, *The Cultural Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (1951); and, to a lesser extent, in Margaret L. Wiley, *The Subtle Knot: Creative Scepticism in Seventeenth-Century England* (1952). However, all three seem to me to be marred by serious weaknesses in interpretation.

Of other general religious problems, at least five deserve special mention. The subject of religious toleration—closely related, of course, to the question of faith and reason—has been most fully

discussed in W. K. Jordan's *The Development of Religious Toleration in England* (1936-1940). Paul Ramsey's lengthy introduction to the Yale edition of Jonathan Edwards' *Enquiry into the . . . Freedom of Will* (1957), offers both penetrating analysis of later seventeenth-century positions regarding this perennial question and illuminating comments on the problem in general, with specific reference to modern discussions as well. The important casuistic literature is discussed in H. R. McAdoo's *The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology* (1949), a work which also throws a good deal of light upon Caroline theology as a whole. There is a learned and perspicuous study of the problem of church-government in Norman Sykes's *Old Priest and New Presbyter* (1956). Finally, on the subject of religious anti-intellectualism there is an excellent brief survey in the first chapter of Howard Schultz's *Milton and Forbidden Knowledge* (1955), a work especially valuable in that it sketches something of the patristic and medieval background.

II

The principal approaches to the Platonists' religious thought and the works in which they are best developed have been discussed in the concluding pages of the introductory chapter. It remains here only to notice the more important of the works not mentioned there—works dealing either with the Platonists' religious outlook or with other aspects of their thought.

Tulloch's view of Cambridge Platonism as a precursor of rational theology and latitudinarianism is still best expressed in the second volume of his *Rational Theology*. Most of the subsequent studies of the Platonists' theology merely echo or paraphrase him. This is, by and large, true of E. A. George, *Seventeenth Century Men of Latitude* (1908); G. P. H. Pawson, *The Cambridge Platonists and Their Place in Religious Thought* (1930); and F. J. Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists* (1926). W. C. De Pauley's *The Candle of the Lord: Studies in the Cambridge Platonists* (1937), is a more analytical, better balanced, and more perspicacious work, reflecting a clearer awareness of the true role and nature of reason in the Platonists' thought. Of briefer general

studies, probably the most valuable is J. A. Stewart's article "Cambridge Platonists," in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. It surveys both the Platonists' thought and their position in relation to their contemporaries—seeing them as a mediating force opposed to Puritanism on the one hand and Prelacy on the other—and it serves as an excellent introduction to them. Even briefer but also valuable is A. W. Argyle's "The Cambridge Platonists," *Hibbert Jour.* 53 (1954), 255–261. The liberal side of the Platonists' theology has been judiciously studied in relation to Arminianism. There is a chapter on them in A. W. Harrison's *Arminianism*, and the subject has been pursued in a more scholarly vein in Rosalie L. Colie's *Light and Enlightenment* (1957), a brief but valuable study which traces the direct personal relations of Dutch Arminians and Cambridge Platonists.

The more purely philosophic and less theological aspect of Cambridge Platonism has been treated in a number of competent studies. They are seen as the fountainhead of British idealism in the opening chapter of John Henry Muirhead's *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy* (1931). Against a broader background, Ernst Cassirer's perceptive *The Platonic Renaissance in England*, tr. J. P. Pettegrove (1953), sees them as an Idealist tunnel threading through the valley lying between the twin peaks of Plato and Kant, with Ficino and Shaftesbury serving as half-way houses on the respective slopes. Cassirer's book—originally published in 1932—contains numerous perceptive insights, and it is particularly valuable in its treatment of Cambridge Platonism proper, although it is marred by the fact that, despite his massive erudition, Cassirer often betrays an unfamiliarity with English literary history. A number of studies have emphasized the Platonists' metaphysical and scientific interests, considering them as, above all, opponents of Cartesian dualism, Hobbesian materialism, or both. Of these, one should single out, at least, E. A. Burt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, rev. ed. (1951), ch. v; Michael Roberts, *The Modern Mind* (1937), ch. iv; and J. B. Mullinger's still useful *Cambridge Characteristics in the Seventeenth Century* (1867), chs. iii, iv. Somewhat less distinguished are two specialized studies of the Platonists' epis-

temology and ethics, respectively: John De Boer, *The Theory of Knowledge of the Cambridge Platonists* (1931), and E. M. Austin, *The Ethics of the Cambridge Platonists* (1935).

III

a) Biographical materials on More are rather scanty. Of primary sources, his own brief autobiographical "Praefatio Generalissima" to the Latin edition of his *Opera Omnia* (1679); correspondence with Anne Conway and her Ragley circle, contained in *Conway Letters*, ed. M. H. Nicolson (1930); the admiringly hagiographic *The Life of the Learned and Pious Dr. Henry More* (1710), written by a younger friend and disciple, Richard Ward; some letters and references scattered through the diaries and/or correspondence of friends, notably through John Worthington's *Diary and Correspondence*—so brief a catalogue virtually exhausts the list of sources. As for secondary materials, there are brief sketches in such reference works as the *Dictionary of National Biography*, John Peile's *Biographical Register of Christ's College, 1505-1905* (1910), and J. B. Mullinger's *The University of Cambridge* (1911), and in virtually all the general studies of the Cambridge Platonists and More. However, the only truly worthwhile and substantial accounts are those in A. B. Grosart, ed., *The Complete Poems of Dr. Henry More* (1878), pp. ix-xxix; Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Philosophical Poems of Henry More* (1931), pp. xi-xli, which emphasizes his early intellectual development and discusses his assimilation of various influences with reference to his poetry; and in the various sections by Marjorie Hope Nicolson interspersed throughout her edition of the *Conway Letters*. I might add that the second part of Ward's *Life*—to which I have not had access—is still in manuscript. I am told that it consists mostly of letters and that it adds little to our knowledge and understanding of More. Finally, there is a fictional portrait of More in J. H. Shorthouse's novel, *John Inglesant* (1882).

b) What might be called "the More literature" is, to say the least, not very extensive. There are some useful explanatory notes and an attempt at presenting a systematic schema of More's philosophic thought in Flora I. MacKinnon's anthology, *Philosophical Writings of Henry More* (1925); there are chapters and

segments in many of the studies cited above, and his thought has been discussed in virtually all the books dealing with Cambridge Platonism. However, the only published full-length book on More himself is Paul Russell Anderson's Ph.D. thesis, *Science in Defense of Liberal Religion: A Study of Henry More's Attempt to Link Seventeenth Century Religion with Science* (1933), a rather uneven study which greatly exaggerates the liberal element in More's theology. More's thought has also been the subject of four other doctoral dissertations. Two of these are short German monographs: H. G. Jentsch's *Henry More in Cambridge* (1935), which, with suspiciously strident overtones, focuses on More's transcendentalism and criticizes him for excessive passivity, other-worldliness, and individualism; and Hugo Reimann's *Mores Bedeutung für die Gegenwart* (1941), a brief but competent study which deals primarily with More's interest in the soul, its freedom, and its immortality. Narrower in scope but both thorough and perceptive is the monograph prefacing Lee Haring's "Henry More's *Psychathanasia* and *Democritus Platonissans*: A Critical Edition" (1961); it analyzes More's various attitudes toward the theory of an infinite universe and especially the poems in which these are expressed. Finally, there is a lengthy and solid study by G. A. Craig, "Umbra Dei: Henry More and the Seventeenth-Century Struggle for Plainness" (1947) which analyzes More's efforts to assert the existence of spirit, his view of its relation to matter, and the influence of his metaphysics upon his style—all seen in the light of the contemporary intellectual background, especially in the light of Cartesianism.

Nor are there many shorter essays specifically concerned with More. Of general estimates, the most penetrating remarks are Coleridge's, now conveniently collected in *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century* (1955). A. C. Benson's "Henry More, The Platonist," in *Essays* (1896), pp. 35-67, is lively and occasionally perceptive but very uneven; Benson clearly had not recently read some of the works he discusses. A. W. Harrison, "Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist," *London Quart. and Holborn Rev.* 158 (1933), 485-492, is reliable as far as it goes but it offers little more than a bird's-eye view. Of essays dealing with more special topics, Grace Neal Dolson, "The Ethical System of Henry More,"

Philos. Rev. 6 (1897), 593-607, analyzes More's ethics while More's most important poem and possible links to Milton are treated in three early articles by Marjorie H. Nicolson: "More's *Psychozoia*," *MLN* 37 (1922), 141-148; "The Spirit World of Milton and More," *SP* 22 (1925), 433-452; and "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*," *PQ* 6 (1927), 1-18. The most valuable studies of More's poetry are to be found in Bullough's and Haring's introductions and notes in their previously cited editions of some of More's major poems.

The fullest account of More's scientific views is probably still that of a nineteenth-century German scholar: Robert Zimmerman, "Henry More und die vierte Dimension des Raumes," *Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 98 (1881), 403-448. There are, however, a number of more available and more recent studies which competently cover the same ground. The most valuable presentations are those of A. J. Snow, *Matter and Gravity in Newton's Physical Philosophy* (1926), pp. 193-204; Burt, *Metaphysical Foundations*, ch. v; and Alexander Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (1957), chs. v, vi. In addition, there are some useful discussions in A. A. Wolf, *A History of Science, Technology, and Philosophy in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries* (1950), pp. 654-666; John Tull Baker, *An Historical and Critical Examination of English Space and Time Theories from Henry More to Bishop Berkeley* (1930), ch. ii, and "Henry More and Kant," *Philos. Rev.* 49 (1937), 298-306; Jammer, *Concepts of Space*, pp. 39-47; Reimann, *Mores Bedeutung*, ch. vii; and René Dugas, *La Mécanique au XVII^e Siècle* (1950), pp. 331-336.

c) Finally, we have to consider studies dealing with specific seventeenth-century problems in which More was particularly interested—studies which of course also analyze his own role in connection with them. The theory of "plastic nature" is discussed in William B. Hunter, Jr., "The Seventeenth-Century Doctrine of Plastic Nature," *Harvard Theol. Rev.* 43 (1950), 197-213, and in Joseph Warren Beach, *The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry* (1936), pp. 54-76. On the theory of innate ideas, the fullest general discussion of its seventeenth-century development is to be found in John W. Yolton's *John*

Locke and the Way of Ideas (1956). Of studies focusing more specifically upon the Cambridge Platonists and More, the most valuable treatments are those of S. P. Lamprecht, "Innate Ideas in the Cambridge Platonists," *Philos. Rev.* 35 (1926), 553-573, and Craig, "Umbra Dei," pp. 372-384. There are also brief analyses in Georg Freiherrn von Hertling, *John Locke und die Schule von Cambridge* (1892), ch. v, and Flora I. MacKinnon, ed. *Philosophical Writings of Henry More* (1925), pp. 276-279. The development of English Cartesianism—related to the Platonists' metaphysics as well as their epistemology—has been most fully studied by S. P. Lamprecht, "The Role of Descartes in Seventeenth-Century England," *Studies in the History of Ideas* 3 (1935), pp. 181-240. Also useful are the briefer studies by M. H. Nicolson, "The Early Stage of Cartesianism in England," *SP* 26 (1929), 356-374; John Laird, "L'influence de Descartes sur la philosophie anglaise du XVII^e siècle," *Revue Philosophique* 122 (1937), 226-256; and J. E. Saveson, "Differing Reactions to Descartes among the Cambridge Platonists," *JHI* 21 (1960), 560-567.

In the more strictly religious realm, two areas might be singled out. Seventeenth-century apocalyptic has been studied in a recent article by Brian G. Cooper, "The Academic Rediscovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the 17th Century," *Baptist Quart.* 18 (1960), 351-362, and in an excellent book by Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia* (1949), in which the subject is treated as a significant phase in the development of the idea of progress.

Finally, one of More's perennial concerns, the subject of enthusiasm, has been discussed in a relatively large literature. An excellent account of seventeenth-century "enthusiasm" and of the opposition to it is that of Umphrey Lee, *The Historical Backgrounds of Early Methodist Enthusiasm* (1931). Also valuable are Clarence M. Webster, "Swift and Some Earlier Satirists of Puritan Enthusiasm," *PMLA* 48 (1933), 1141-1153; George Williamson, "The Restoration Revolt Against Enthusiasm," *SP* 30 (1933), 571-603; Charles E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism* (1931), pp. 133-322; Howard Schultz, *Milton and Forbidden Knowledge*, pp. 141-156; and, in a more philosophical vein, Joe Lee Davis, "Mystical Versus Enthusiastic Sensibility," *JHI* 4

(1943), 301-319. Much broader in scope is Ronald A. Knox's *Enthusiasm* (1950), but the book is generally disappointing and is especially weak on England. Truman G. Steffan's "The Social Argument against Enthusiasm, 1650-1660," *Studies in English*, no. 4126 (1941), pp. 39-63, contains valuable references but his interpretation seems to me to be completely in error. From a Quaker point of view, Rufus M. Jones's book, *Spiritual Reformers of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (1914), and *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1919), deal mostly with the general European scene, but also touch upon England. On Quakerism proper, the best history of the early phase remains that of William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (1955), and *The Second Period of Quakerism* (1919). Of special relevance to our subject is Geoffrey F. Nuttall's *Studies in Christian Enthusiasm: Illustrated from Early Quakerism* (1948), a well-written little book but one which is narrow in scope. It concentrates upon four or five early Quakers as types of moral, emotional, didactic, or spiritual enthusiasm, and its method is more biographical than analytical. Finally, the subject has been studied from a semantic point of view in a recent dissertation by Abraham Philip Persky, "The Changing Concepts of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" (1959).

Selected Bibliography

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A bibliography of More's works, listing all their editions, may be found in *Philosophical Writings of Henry More*, ed. Flora I. Mackinnon (New York, 1925), pp. 233-245. It may be brought up to date by the addition of the *Conway Letters*, the facsimile reproduction of the 1690 translation of the *Enchiridion Ethicum*, Bullough's edition of the *Philosophical Poems*, the translations of all or part of More's correspondence with Descartes, and Haring's unpublished edition of some of More's poems, all of which are listed below. The following list includes only the works germane to this study, arranged according to their chronological order of initial publication. I have cited all the first editions as well as those that I have ordinarily cited and any other editions of special interest. Since More often revised considerably, I have generally preferred a later to an earlier edition, even where both were equally available. For the majority of works included in them, I have therefore relied primarily on the early eighteenth-century collections, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr. Henry More*, The Fourth Edition Corrected and much Enlarged (London, 1712), and *The Theological Works of the most Pious and Learned Henry More, D. D.* (London, 1708), both of which incorporate the revisions and scholia added by More in the Latin edition of his *Opera Omnia* (London, 1675-1679). Works generally cited from these editions are designated by P.W. and T.W. respectively. With reference to other works of which more than one edition is extant, the edition ordinarily used has been designated by an asterisk.

Psychodia Platonica; or, A Platonicall Song of the Soul, Consisting of Foure Severall Poems; viz, Psychozoia, Psychathanasia, Antipsychapannychia, Antimonopsychia (Cambridge, 1642).

Democritus Platonissans; or, An Essay upon the Infinity of Worlds out of Platonic Principles (Cambridge, 1646).

Philosophicall Poems (Cambridge, 1647). Includes all of foregoing, now partly revised, and adds some new minor poems and both interpretive prose notes and a number of poetic appendices—one of them being "The Praeexistency of the Soul"—to the older poems.

- **The Complete Poems of Dr. Henry More*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh, 1878).
- Philosophical Poems of Henry More*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (Manchester, 1931). Includes only *Psychozoia* and some minor poems; has solid lengthy introduction and full notes.
- "Henry More's *Psychathanasia* and *Democritus Platonissans*: A Critical Edition," ed. Lee Haring (unpub. doctoral diss., Columbia Univ., 1961).
- Observations upon Anthroposophia Theomagica and Anima Magica Abscondita* [by Eugenius Philalethes, i.e. T. Vaughan] (London, 1650). Published under pseudonym of Alazonomastix Philalethes.
- *——— [Same], publ. with *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (London, 1655). The title page of the principal work in this volume, *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, has 1656, but the other title pages have 1655.
- The Second Lash of Alazonomastix; Containing a Solid and Serious Reply to a very uncivill Answer to Certain Observations upon Anthroposophia Theomagica, and Anima Magica Abscondita* (Cambridge, 1651).
- *——— [Same], publ. with *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (London, 1655).
- An Antidote against Atheisme, or, An Appeal to the Naturall Faculties of the Minde of Man, whether there be not a God* (London, 1652). [P.W.].
- Conjectura Cabbalistica, or, A Conjectural Essay of Interpreting the minde of Moses according to a Threefold Caballa: Viz. Literal, Philosophical, Mystical, or, Divinely Moral* (London, 1653). [P.W.].
- The Defence of the Threefold Cabbala* (London, 1653). Published in same volume with *Conjectura Cabbalistica*—upon passages of which it comments and expounds—but has a separate title page. [P.W.].
- An Appendix To the late Antidote against Atheism*, publ. with *Antidote against Atheism*, 2nd ed. (London, 1655). [P.W.].
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- An Explanation of the grand Mystery of Godliness* (London, 1660). [T.W.].
- Henrici Mori Epistolae Quatuor ad Renatum Des-Cartes*, in *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr. Henry More*, 2nd ed. (London, 1662). [P.W.].
- [Same], in Descartes, René, *Correspondance avec Arnauld et*

Morus: *Texte Latin et Traduction*, ed. and trans. Geneviève Lewis (Paris, 1953), pp. 94–187. Includes full Latin text and French translation of both Descartes' and More's letters.

"Descartes and Henry More on the Beast-Machine—A Translation of Their Correspondence Pertaining to Animal Automatism," trans. Leonora D. Cohen, *Annals of Science*, 1 (1936), 48–61.

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The Apology of Dr. Henry More (London, 1664). Published in same volume with *Mystery of Iniquity* but has a separate title page.

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Divine Dialogues, Containing Sundry Disquisitions and Instructions Concerning the Attributes of God and His Providence in the World (London, 1668). Published under pseudonym of Franciscus Palaeopolitanus.

*—— [Same], 2nd ed. (London, 1713).

Enchiridion Metaphysicum: sive, De Rebus Incorporéis Succincta et Luculenta Dissertatio (London, 1671).

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H. Mori Cantabrigiensis Opera Omnia, tum quae Latine, tum quae Anglice Scripta Sunt; Nunc Vero Latinitate Donata (London, 1675–1679).

Tetractys Anti-Astrologica, or, The Four Chapters in the Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness, Which contain a brief but solid Confutation of Judiciary Astrology, With Annotations upon each Chapter (London, 1681). A reprint of Bk. VII, chs. xiv–xvii of *Mystery of Godliness*, but with a special preface and numerous additions.

Two choice and useful Treatises: The One Lux Orientalis; or, An

- Enquiry into the Opinion of the Eastern Sages Concerning the Praeexistence of souls . . .* [by Joseph Glanvill] *The other, A Discourse of Truth . . .* [by George Rust] *With Annotations on them both* (London, 1682). The *Annotations* were published anonymously but More's authorship appears virtually certain. All the internal evidence points to it, and Richard Ward, who knew More personally, attributes it to him.
- "Letters Philosophical and Moral between the author and Dr. Henry More," in Norris, John, *The Theory and Regulation of Love, A Moral Essay in Two Parts: To which are added, Letters Philosophical and Moral between the author and Dr. Henry More* (London, 1688).
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